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ABSTRACT

Instructional materials on parenting skills for parents of children 5 to 12 years of age are provided, with teaching guides for extension service agents. Organized as a series of nine leaflets followed by nine corresponding lessons, leaflets for parents concern: (1) an overview of the leaflets; (2) readiness: guiding normal development; (3) empowerment: achieving self-discipline; (4) nurturance: building a healthy self-esteem; (5) education: helping prepare the child for positive experiences in school; (6) wellness: nutrition, health, and safety; (7) awareness: sex education; (8) lifestyles: adapting to change; and (9) supports: seeking help. Leaflets offer facts, activities, guidelines, and reference lists. For extension agents delivering the nine corresponding lessons, a lesson plan is provided for each session of parenting instruction. Plans enumerate objectives and materials, provide an introductory statement, describe learning activities for parents, and list references. (RH)

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February 1989 For [redacted] of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 499 Parenting Renewal

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OVERVIEW

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LEAFLET 1 IN A SERIES OF 9

Welcome to this series of leaflets for parents of children five to twelve years of age. This first leaflet gives an overview of what the others in the series will be about. The authors hope that this leaflet will help you:

- realize that you are your child's most important teacher,
- determine the quality of parenting information,
- realize that you are the expert on your own children, and
- choose the attributes you want your children to have.

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You may wonder about the name of the series. Because it has been designed to help renew and update parenting skills, the series has been named PARENTING RENEWAL. Sometimes parents forget what they have already learned and find reminders helpful. The team of people who gathered the information for these leaflets have included some of their own experiences and summaries of advice from child-rearing experts. They know that you have to consider all you read and hear about child rearing in the light of your own child. In this first leaflet you will find information about judging the quality of parenting information, attributes parents want their children to have, and how you are the expert on your own child.

YOU ARE THE EXPERT ON YOUR OWN CHILD

Everybody is quite generous with opinions about how to be a parent. Often you get this information without even asking for it. Each expert claims to have at least some of the answers to child-rearing problems. You cannot follow what every expert advises because some of the information is conflicting. The question is, how do you know to whom you should listen? There is one principle to remember: You are the expert on your own child. The decision on what to do and whose opinion to follow lies within you. You can choose to listen to any advice you wish to. You can decide which advice to put into practice depending upon your values, your child's personality, and your unique situation. In the end you have to use your own judgment. You know your child better than anyone.

PS 018620

Most parents learn about being a good parent from their own childhood experiences and from reading. To which parenting information should you listen? One authority in family life (Myers-Walls, 1983) gives the following guidelines for judging and using information about parenting:

1. Recognize your own needs. For example, just because the information you are reading implies that all children need more responsibility does not mean that yours does. Your child may need what the information recommends if:
   - You have talked about the problem before.
   - The information makes you feel guilty because of what you expect of yourself as a parent, not because of what someone else expects.
   - The family described is like yours.
2. Shop for good-quality information. After you decide that you do need help with a problem, look for information on which you can rely. Consider:
   - The source of the information. Have you received useful information from this source before? If they claim to have all the answers, watch out!

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- The reliability of the statistics. Do they sound reasonable to you? Check your local library for information about sources, for example, W.A. and L.S. Katz's *Magazines for Libraries: For the General Reader*.

3. Use the information in the best way to suit your own life.

4. Involve the family members affected by the change.

5. Write down what you are going to do differently and be as specific as you can.

6. After you have used the new technique for a while, ask yourself if it has improved the situation. If it has not, make another change. The best approach for you and your child is what you feel comfortable with. Also, children respond differently to different techniques. A good technique may not work with some children.

WHAT MY CHILD DOES WELL AND WHY

On the lines below write one thing that each of your children between five and twelve does well.

____

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On the lines below tell how you taught each of your children to do what they do well

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CAN YOU "GROW" AN IDEAL CHILD?

Look at this list of attributes people value. Draw circles around the 10 you would like your child to have when he* is twelve years old.

Adventurous
Assertive
Broad-minded
Capable
Cheerful
Clean
Courageous
Creative
Curious
Efficient
Forgiving
Funny
Generous
Helpful
Honest
Independent
Intelligent
Kind
Loving
Obedient
Persevering
Polite
Responsible
Self-controlled
Sympathetic
Tolerant

*The pronouns "he, she, him, her, his, hers" are used throughout the leaflets interchangeably. Statements are equally applicable to a child or parent of either sex.

Now put these 10 in order of importance. Place number 1 by the most important attribute you would like your child to have. Place a 10 by the one of the 10 that is least important to you. Place a 2 by the second most important one, 3 by the third most important one and so on. There is no particular right order. Just decide what you would like.

Most of us have an idea of what we think an ideal person is like. Not everyone agrees on the attributes an ideal person has.

Can parents raise an ideal child? Yes____ No____
Why or why not?

Are you the only influence on your child? Yes____ No____

What are other influences on your child?

HOW DO "IDEAL CHILD" VALUES DETERMINE PARENTING BEHAVIOR?

Here are examples of how ideas about ideal human beings determine parenting styles.

1. Mrs. Johnson values physical fitness and good health. She enrolls her children in gymnastics and takes them to the doctor regularly for checkups. She reads medical and health books, sees that the children are getting the right food, and talks about the importance of good health.

2. Mr. Jones wants his children to appreciate the outdoors and he wants them to be independent. He takes his six-year-old camping and longs for the day when she can join scouts and a 4-H club with camping programs. He remembers his childhood camping experiences favorably. He enjoys teaching his daughter to prepare simple foods now and to do other simple things for herself.

3. Mrs. Roseman values education above all else. She feels that an educated person can get ahead in the world. She watches the news and discusses it with her children at meals. She requires that each older child study or read for an hour each week night. She spends time talking with each child about his personal interests. She knows that a child's judgmental skills begin to be formed early.

How do the values you have for your child influence what you do as a parent?

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SERIES

Three years ago in South Carolina, all types of people came to meetings conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service to help identify problems in South Carolina. Some of the problems identified most often were teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, the high number of people in prison, school dropouts, the number of people on welfare, child abuse, and the disunity of families. A special team of county agents and state Extension workers studied parenting programs that had been successful in solving these problems in other states. This team discovered that a person's parents have more to do with how a person turns out than does any other person.

The team members put together the evaluation results of other programs and research on how people are affected by their parents. They discovered that the middle childhood years are very important to the development of a child. The Parenting Renewal Program for parents of children five through twelve is the result. The leaflet topics are:

- Overview of the Program
- Readiness: Guiding Development
- Empowerment: Achieving Self-Discipline in Children
- Nurturance: Building Healthy Self-Esteem in Children
- Education: Helping Children Succeed in School
- Wellness: Keeping Children Healthy and Safe
- Awareness: Developing Values
- Lifestyles: Adapting to Changes
- Supports: Seeking Help

The first letters of the titles of Leaflets 2 through 8 spell "RENEWAL."

SUMMARY

In the nine leaflets, you will learn how to:

- Aid your child's physical development
- Help your child grow into a competent adult
- Communicate with your child
- Use firm instead of harsh discipline
- Help your child develop a healthy self-esteem
- Contribute to your child's success in school
- Help your child understand different lifestyles
- Help your child develop values
- Keep your child healthy and safe
- Cope with your child's emotions
- Ask for help when you need it

Remember, you are your child's most important teacher. What you do and believe influences your child's future. By having read this far in Leaflet 1, you have shown that you want to be the best possible parent. The rest of this series will help you become more competent in that important role.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet is about the development of your child. You will learn about normal growth.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND REFERENCES

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READINESS: GUIDING NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

LEAFLET 2 IN A SERIES OF 9

The fact that you are reading this leaflet shows that you want to be the best parent you can be. You probably realize the importance of understanding how children develop. Young children, like plants, will grow on their own. Children, also like plants, will flourish best under nurturing conditions. In this leaflet, you will read facts about the growth of children. You will learn how to determine the behavior appropriate for certain ages. The leaflet will also tell how to nurture children in the middle childhood years.

UNIQUENESS OF CHILDREN

Think of sea shells and how they are different. The little differences cause no major problems in the purpose or function of the shell. The uniqueness of each item of creation is special and helps distinguish one from the other. The smaller shells may fit better in the glass vase you have in mind for them. The larger shells may have a sound that is clearer than the smaller ones. Each has special characteristics. So it is with children.

Children differ in intelligence, coordination, dependency, and temperament. As you think of other differences of children, list them below.

FIVE UNIVERSAL LAWS ABOUT HUMAN GROWTH

In spite of differences in children, researchers agree on the following truths about human growth:

1. The child wants to grow.
2. Growth has directions.
3. Growth has order.
4. Each child is an individual.
5. Growth is uneven.

PS 018620

MAJOR TASKS OF CHILDREN FROM FIVE TO TWELVE

According to scientist Erik Erikson, the major task of the child from five to twelve years of age is to achieve a sense of industry (opposite of being lazy) rather than one of inferiority. To do this, accomplishments must be made in three major ways: through developing a sense of self, gaining social acceptance, and experiencing achievement. Parents who know what to expect during each stage of development can encourage achievement and not push the child beyond what he can do. Parents can help the child develop a sense of self, gain social skills, and

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experience achievement. Accomplishing the task at hand makes the child feel good about himself and be able to go on to more difficult tasks.

This does not mean that a child needs to be enrolled in afterschool activities. One child was sent to five extra activities outside school every week. These activities left little time for play, friendship, reading, or hobbies. Children who grow up using their imaginations to find things to do after school will probably be successful adults, especially if they are given enough love.

CHARACTERISTICS BY AGE

As you read the characteristics of children listed below, remember each child is unique. The information given is for the average child. Your child may be a little ahead or a little behind the average child in some aspects. Very few, if any, children fit this profile exactly. How children grow depends on the guidance provided by their parents and other adults. Characteristics they inherit from their parents make a difference. The experiences children have inside and outside the home also affect how they grow. The characteristics below are to serve only as a guide. You may find them helpful when working with middle-years children. Take a few minutes now and read the characteristics of children the same age as your child. Keep the leaflet and look at it again as your child grows. Right now, though, place a check by the characteristics that you have noticed already happening with your child.

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
  Weigh between 33 and 52 pounds
  Are between 39 and 46 inches tall
Physical:
  Are poised and controlled
  Can throw different-sized balls
  May have difficulty catching them
  Do not take naps
  Usually cannot roller skate, ride a bike, or jump rope
  May practice the above for hours, however
  Put off going to bathroom
  Boys may grab genitals to put off going to the bathroom because they are busy
  Do not get tired as often
  Can learn to snap fingers, wink, and whistle
Intellectual:
  Ask many questions
  Can tell their right from their left, but not yet in other people
  Can use over 2,000 words
  Begin to learn colors, letters, and numbers
  Can recite a story
  Very few can actually read
Emotional:
  Are cooperative and helpful
  Can be upset by changes in plans
  May say "I hate you" or "I love you"
  May release tension by thumb sucking, rhythmic movements, or genital-touching
Social:
  Have closest ties to parents
  Love teachers
  Like one-on-one contacts

Need to be first or the best
May tell one another "you are too dumb to be on my team"
May bribe each other with promises
May not keep these promises
Sometimes feel that no one likes them
Are able to choose activities and friends
Like to play house and practice different roles

SIX-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
  Weigh between 35 and 56 pounds
  Are between 42 and 49 inches tall
Physical:
  Like to play games with rules, but find this hard to do
  Like to roughhouse, but often overdo it
  Seem to always be hungry
  May develop a sweet tooth, so diet needs to be watched
  May wet bed on occasion
  Gain molars and may begin to lose baby teeth
  Are clumsy and tend to "fiddle around"
Intellectual:
  Learn to read words and word combinations
  Learn to write capital letters before lower case
  May make letters and numbers backward
  May have a hard time making choices, even about things you were sure your child knew earlier
  Think of death as reversible
  May believe that they have caused a death when someone close to them dies
  Do not like to lose games, for example, checkers
  May go back to using baby talk
Emotional:
  Say what they think and feel
  Get feelings hurt easily
  Are self-centered and think you should stop what you are doing to watch them
  Have many temper tantrums
  Switch rapidly from crying to laughter or vice versa
  Release tension by nail biting, leg swinging, teeth grinding, hair chewing, or wiggling
Social:
  See themselves as big kids
  Are loving to smaller children, animals, and babies
  May have difficulty getting along with brothers and sisters
  Are bossy
  Have unsteady friendships
  May take pleasure in leaving a third child out
  May be unkind to others
  Notice when they themselves are slighted
  Are not modest

SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
  Weigh between 40 and 65 pounds
  Are between 44 and 51 inches tall
Physical:
  Are active
  Are more cautious than six-year-olds in trying new things
  Are better at jumping rope, bike riding, and skating
  Repeat an activity over and over again until they have mastered it
  Drop an activity for a new activity once the first one is mastered
  Can draw and write better than six-year-olds

Love chasing each other, climbing trees, and spinning in circles
Enjoy quiet time to themselves
Enjoy comparing who is fastest, smartest, and best
Can build a model from simple plans
Like to build things, but often get upset before project is complete
Handle dressing completely

Intellectual:
Enjoy reading as a pastime
Sit and think or daydream
Begin to take the viewpoint of others and say what adults want to hear, for example, "That was a good sandwich."
Can tell time
Divide good and bad people in their minds
Like to tell and hear jokes
Like to collect

Emotional:
Are more polite than six-year-olds
Less opinionated and stubborn than when younger
Are sensitive about their bodies
Will not undress in front of anyone
Enjoy being part of the family
Like to make gifts for those they care about
Are eager to help adults
Like adult approval
Worry about failure and often will not try something new or hard

Social:
May be moody, sad, or angry
Less likely to direct those emotions to others
Can learn table manners
Are polite to adults
Share toys, secrets, and time with friends
Get along better with brothers and sisters, but this depends on age
Are still self-centered
Ask for "real" jobs
Listen as well as talk at mealtime

EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
Weigh between 41 and 76 pounds
Are between 46 and 53 inches tall

Physical:
On the average, girls are six months ahead of boys in physical maturity
Often get wild and reckless when left to play as a group
Have an increase in speed and ease of performance
Complain of stomach cramps or full bladders when under pressure
May return to thumb sucking with fatigue or stress

Intellectual:
Have much curiosity
Continue collecting
Begin to recognize differences in people.
Like to hear stories about children in other times and places
Begin to realize that parents and teachers are not perfect
Like cooking
Can follow rules of games
Like to make up rules for games
Like board games and video games

Emotional:
Are more self-confident than seven-year-olds
Care about how their family feels about them

Are very critical of themselves
Will go ahead and try more new things than a year ago
Will sulk
Worry about acceptance in different peer groups
Like to argue

Social:

Love to gossip
Are not intentionally vicious
Feel friendships with peers are important
Have high expectations of parents
Enjoy pleasing other adults
Like to role play adult feelings about religion, ethnic groups, and money

NINE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:

Weigh between 49 and 89 pounds
Are between 48 and 56 inches tall

Physical:

Girls may start puberty spurt of growth
Can show skill in team sports
Require less sleep than younger children or teens
May neglect personal cleanliness
Need to be reminded to comb hair, brush teeth, and change underwear
Enjoy biking, skating, and swimming

Intellectual:

Are more mature and show better judgement in their actions than younger children
Are attracted by materials and information
Can solve problems
Show increased awareness of sex differences
Can be self-directed about taking responsibility for a task
Have a broad sense of humor and know a variety of jokes
Demand to know all the rules to a game

Emotional:

Exhibit a wide range of feelings that change quickly
Have a strong need to please
Are nervous about being evaluated
Still get upset easily
Appear self-confident
May fiddle around or pick at their nails when nervous
Show genuine empathy for others
Accept failures and mistakes more realistically

Social:

Tend to play in smaller groups
Do not usually boast, brag, or attack other children as they did earlier
Are fair
Make fewer demands on parents and other adults
Love to be chosen by teachers and peers
Can be trusted to do what they say they will do
Love to talk with friends
Share secrets, surprises, and information
Become interested in clothes

TEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:

Weigh between 54 and 105 pounds
Are between 50 and 59 inches tall

Physical:

Have become competent at sports, games, and other activities
Girls may start breast development

- May wet bed
- Girls may have first menstruation

Intellectual:

- Have longer attention spans
- Are able to judge themselves accurately
- Appear to be "experts" on things they know little about
- Like to make long lists
- Begin to understand social injustice and take up causes
- Love trivia
- Like organization and schedules
- Understand the difference between thinking and doing

Emotional:

- Like and accept themselves
- Are willing to admit mistakes
- See peers as important as family
- May adopt another family as their own, especially if family is different from their own
- Are generally agreeable
- May withdraw if things go wrong
- Enjoy putting things over on adults and then feel guilty
- Will seldom tell on a friend

Social:

- Are at peace with their world and with the people in it
- Enjoy planning and going on outings and trips
- Are great joiners
- Are protective of brothers and sisters
- Resent being told what to do
- Need constant reminders of daily responsibilities
- Express friendship by pushing, punching, or wrestling (boys)
- Tend to have one best friend at a time (girls)
- Like to tell jokes and ask riddles

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:

- Weigh between 60 and 119 pounds
- Are between 52 and 61 inches tall

Physical:

- Have an increase in energy and appetite
- Need a complete eye exam because visual impairment begins to show up
- Experience rapid growth in feet and hands
- Girls are more likely to experience a growth spurt than boys
- Girls may have first menstruation
- Have not outgrown sloppiness

Intellectual:

- Become more skilled in information processing
- Enjoy new experiences and knowledge about the world around them
- Are pleased when they do well in school
- Enjoy receiving praise
- Are less receptive of criticism
- May daydream or fantasize about the future
- May criticize or confront adults to get attention
- May challenge parents on child rearing or family values
- May have strong views

Emotional:

- Have trouble controlling feelings and actions
- Overextend themselves
- Form loyal and needed friendships
- Are martyrs and complain, "Everything I do is wrong."
- Are highly critical of parents' judgment

Often quarrel with parents
Worry if they will be accepted or rejected by a group

Social:
May be defiant to parents and teachers
Try to master increasingly difficult physical skills
Desire to become independent
Are loud and aggressive in groups
Are more polite to strangers than to parents
Choose best friends with similar temperaments and common interests
Show increased interest in opposite sex
May aggravate opposite sex

TWELVE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
Weigh between 65 and 135 pounds
Are between 54 and 64 inches tall

Physical:
Have lost all baby teeth
Have longer noses, flatter abdomens, and waistlines develop
Develop pubic and underarm hair (girls)
May have first menstruation (girls)
Begin testicle enlargement which continues until about age 18 (boys)
Desire privacy when seeing the doctor

Intellectual:
Increase in problem-solving ability
Become interested in religion
May become moralistic in their attitudes and judgments
No longer take everything for granted
Mature in their ability to postpone satisfaction until later for the sake of accomplishing a task or desired goal
Have trouble organizing and keeping track of school work

Emotional:
Get feelings hurt if singled out and criticized
Are rarely indifferent about anyone
May accuse parents of loving other siblings more
Still have need for affection from parents
Do not like affection from parents in front of peers and other adults
Become upset when adults tease them or make fun of them
Believe they are no longer children

Social:
Relate better to peers and adults
May do loud, silly things in a group
Are critical of own appearance
May have wild fads in dress
Do not yet have cleanliness as a high priority
May develop "hero worship" and idolize bold and adventurous adults
Are more able to deal with jealousy and rivalry than before
Turn to peers for information about sex and birth control

WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT MY CHILD

Tell what you like best about your child on the lines below. If you have several children, use a line for each one.

____

____

____

FACTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT DURING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Developmental tasks arise during certain periods of a person's life. Accomplishing the task at hand makes the individual confident and able to go on to more difficult tasks.

1. No two children are alike; yet each follows the same general pattern of growth.
2. Most children develop faster in some areas than in others. For example, a child who knows many words may not be able to run as fast as a child who just knows a few words.
3. The best way a parent can help a child develop a strong vocabulary is to use many different words and talk with the child as much as possible.
4. The parent is the child's most important teacher. Parents help children learn judgmental skills, develop interests, and adopt values.
5. Children in the middle years depend on and need caring adults in their lives.
6. Before a new skill can be learned, the child's muscles and coordination must be mature enough to allow such learning.

THINKING TOGETHER

What would you do and how would you feel if:

Your five-year-old still took a nap?
Your five-year-old could not tell her right hand from her left hand?
Your six-year-old used a larger vocabulary than a neighbor of the same age?
Your eleven-year-old did not show interest in the opposite sex?
What can be concluded from the answers to the above questions?

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(Answer - As long as the middle-years child is developing in the right order, it does really matter if he is a little slow or a little fast in one area. Just become familiar with the order of development in middle years. Do not be upset if the child cannot do things beyond his developmental stage. On the other hand, do not think the child is a genius just because he is a little ahead in some area of development. If you suspect that your child is seriously behind others, contact your school guidance personnel or physician.)

SIGNS OF BEHAVIORAL DELAY

Your child may need special help if she:

- has trouble with small motor skills, like writing;
- constantly complains about health;
- has trouble concentrating;
- skips lines or loses place in reading;
- is too listless and uncaring;
- spends much time studying for tests and still makes low grades on them;
- is more than one half year behind in school;

- has problems getting along with peers;
- throws tantrums;
- has many temper flare-ups;
- is sad most of the time;
- gets upset easily;
- has a negative self-concept; and/or
- bites nails, sucks thumb, or has twitches in the face.

HELP YOUR CHILD GROW

Here are some ways to help your child grow. List others on the space below.

. Answer your child's questions.
. Acknowledge what your child says to you.
. See that your child gets plenty of rest, exercise, adequate nutrition, and health care.
. Help your child to form judgmental skills by asking her opinion and discussing television shows, news, and books. Ask, "What would you do if...?" or "What did he do wrong?"
. Share your feelings and invite your child to do so.
. Help your child to have interesting experiences.
. Prepare a private place for your child to study.

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SUMMARY

Children are individuals with their own special temperaments and traits. Parents can help children have healthy self-concepts by respecting the differences in children. The other leaflets in this series contain more ways you can help your child develop.

WHAT NEXT?

In the next leaflet you will read about what discipline is and its purpose. You will be asked to think about methods of child rearing that work.

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Zeece, P. D., & Weigel, R. R. (1984). *Growing out of middle childhood-nine-to twelve-year-olds.* Iowa State University: Cooperative Extension Service.

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 501 Parenting Renewal

EMPOWERMENT: ACHIEVING SELF-DISCIPLINE

LEAFLET 3 IN A SERIES OF 9

This leaflet will help you:
- identify discipline styles,
- understand the difference between effective discipline and ineffective discipline,
- relate communication to effective discipline, and
- understand different temperaments of children.

DISCIPLINE - EMPOWERMENT

Do you know what the word "empowerment" means? It is a complex word. It means to make the person feel that he can improve his life and the lives of other people. As you rear your child, you are making things happen for him. You do this by teaching him how to get along with other people. These other people may be his family members, adults, and other children in school or in your community. You empower him when you teach him to make choices and set goals for himself.

By teaching your child not only to cope with the problems of life, but also to contribute to social concerns, you are empowering him to take control of his own life. Whether or not you empower your child is determined by the way you guide (or discipline) him.

STYLES OF DISCIPLINE

Choose the correct definition for the following styles of discipline:

_____ 1. permissive
_____ 2. moderate
_____ 3. strict

a. The parent has a few rules and enforces them consistently, firmly, with kindness, warmth, and love.
b. The child makes all the rules and decisions.
c. The parent expects immediate obedience and gives no explanation for demands.

Answers

1. B
2. A
3. C

Which style of discipline is more likely to produce an adult who feels empowered to make things right that are wrong? Which style of discipline would produce a responsible, cooperative adult with a good self-concept who is considerate of others? If you guessed the moderate style of discipline, you are right on target. This middle-of-the-road style of discipline is what we will focus on in this leaflet. Once you have completed the activities in this leaflet, you will have developed skills that will allow you to be moderate in your discipline practices.

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PARENTING LIKE YOUR PARENTS

Parents sometimes discipline like their parents disciplined them. Write about one discipline method that your parents used with you that you are using with your child.

____

____

EXAMPLES OF MODERATE DISCIPLINE

Place a check by the moderate style of discipline in each of the examples below.

1. When a third grader brings home a poor report card, her father
   a. calls her "stupid."
   b. firmly limits his daughter's television viewing.

2. When a father discovers that his ten-year-old has shoplifted a toy from local store, he
   a. spanks her severely to show her that she has done something wrong.
   b. accompanies his child to the store where she returns the toy to the store manager.

3. After an eight-year-old viciously hits his five-year-old sister for kicking over a tower he was building in the living room, his mother
   a. makes him apologize to his sister.
   b. listens to his reasons for the outburst, asks him to identify other ways of responding to the problem, and sends him and his sister to their rooms for 15 minutes.

4. When he sees his ten-year-old son writing an obscenity on a neighbor child's driveway, his father
   a. decides to ignore the incident since "boys will be boys."
   b. immediately calls the neighbor to apologize and has the child remove the word.

Answers:

1. The more effective response is (b) because limiting television is more likely to help the child improve her school performance. The (a) response is destructive because it reduces the child's sense of self-esteem.

2. The more effective response is (b). The child learns to make amends for her misbehaviors. The father does so without embarrassing his child. Spanking in (a) would be ineffective because the child already knows that she has done "something wrong." This response resembles revenge and has the effect of instilling fear in his child as well as teaching her that violence is a preferred response to problems.

3. The more effective response is (b). Mother shows her willingness to listen to her child's point of view and, by encouraging him to identify alternatives to hitting, nurtures her son's problem-solving abilities.

4. The more effective response is (b). The father cannot ignore this offense. He should be firm without being cruel. An apology by the father is appropriate. Having the child clean the driveway is a lesson in justice. If the father does nothing as in (a), then he is showing his approval of a serious misbehavior.

KNOW YOUR CHILD

Each child has his own unique personality. Children may fall into one of three different personality types: difficult, easy, or slow to warm up.

A difficult child -

- shrieks rather than whines.
- is upset by new people or places.
- is irregular in eating and sleeping habits.
- has violent temper tantrums.

An easy child -

- is generally cheerful.
- responds agreeably to new people, places, and foods.
- has regular eating and sleeping habits.

A slow-to-warm-up child -

- withdraws from new situations.
- adapts to changes slowly.

There are children who do not fit into any of these types. They are neither difficult, easy, or slow-to-warm-up children. The different ways in which children behave depend on the qualities inherited from their parents. You may have noticed that some children will work at a problem until it is solved, whereas others give up at the smallest hint of trouble. Some children are very active. Others are quiet most of the time.

If we agree that children can be very different, then we must agree that their differences must be considered when we are teaching them how to behave.

Some parents wonder if their child's behavior is mature enough for her age. They are sometimes concerned about their child's actions and think that the child is not making progress. The child may seem to have too much energy or she may ask what seems to be too many questions.

This is not bad behavior. The child is learning about her world in the only ways she knows how. It is up to her parents and teachers to guide her learning in a manner that will be most useful to her. Parents must see that their child learns all that she can.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

Talking with your child is a very important part of empowering him. In talking with him, you want him to feel comfortable about letting you know what his feelings are and how they affect what he does. Another goal should be to increase your child's self-esteem and cooperation. (Leaflet 4 will have more about self-esteem.)

These two goals can be accomplished by following the rules listed below when talking with your child.

- Be polite.
- Show appreciation.
- Attack the problem instead of the child.
- Avoid labels that hurt.
- Praise the specific accomplishment of your child.
- Stop talking and just listen.

These rules let your child know that you love him no matter what happens. They help him to feel respected and worthwhile. One scholar pointed out that the "Language of Acceptance" can be both spoken and unspoken.

You can let your child know you accept him by:

1. Not interfering. An example would be not telling your child to color the sky blue unless he asks what color to make it.

2. Listening. Remain silent when your child talks. You may lean forward, nod your head, or put your arm around him.

Inviting your child to talk with you makes him feel that he is a worthwhile person. One way to do this is to use door openers like "Gee!," "Interesting," "I see...," and "Really?" Try getting your child to talk by saying "Tell me more!" or "I want to hear more about this."

Let your child know that you are trying to understand his feelings. Act as a sounding board by sending back what you think the child is saying. We do this by saying, "You mean...," "In other words...," or "You really are..."

Conflicts arise when parents are insensitive to their child's feelings and needs. When we order our children around or make too many unreasonable and unnecessary requests in an authoritarian tone of voice, our children resent it. Instead, we should use the Language of Acceptance and let our children know that we understand their point of view. For example, we speak in a polite manner and say "I'm sorry to interrupt you, but...," or "I realize you may not want to, but it would help me out so much of you would..." So, parents need to learn to respect their children and the situation.

USING THE LANGUAGE OF ACCEPTANCE

Read the situation below and place an X by the responses which would NOT be an example of the Language of Acceptance.

Situation: Daughter comes in ranting and raving, "I hate Jane. All she ever wants to do is play - and with Mary. It's not fair. Mary is my best friend. I'll fix Jane. I told Mary that she takes things. Now maybe Mary won't want to play with her anymore."

Responses:

_____ 1. I'm interested in hearing more about Jane and Mary. Let's talk some more.

_____ 2. Sounds like you are so upset with Jane for trying to take Mary away that you feel like getting even.

_____ 3. That's not a nice thing to say about Jane. Go to your room and plan on not playing with anyone for a week.

If you figured that the response 3 did not express the Language of Acceptance, you were right. The Language of Acceptance shows that you want to share what the other is feeling.

The Language of Unacceptance makes your child feel like she is not smart enough to solve her problems. It discourages your child by pointing out how smart you are. "Here let me help you. I don't think you can do that yet." "Wait until you get bigger." "You're not old enough." These phrases discourage your child's interest in trying new things.

You use the Language of Acceptance when you give honest praise. When your child does something worthy of praise, let her know what it is. For example, if your seven-year-old daughter made a clay bowl for you at school, you would not tell her that she is the best potter in the world. Your child would realize that this could not be true and would feel that your comment was not sincere. A better response might be to praise something that you really like about the bowl, like the color or the shape.

A comment which some parents are famous for is "You can do better than that." Your child may give up or think that she will never be able to please you.

PRAISING YOUR CHILD

Circle the more honest and effective praise in the items below.

1. Mary made "breakfast in bed" for you. The juice, cereal, and coffee were terrific, but the eggs were like rubber.

    a. "What a treat! You're the best cook in the house."
    b. "What a thoughtful thing to do! You are sure learning to cook."

2. Joan brings home her report card with an A in Art and C's in everything else. Her oldest sister has all A's.

    a. "You've done exceptionally well in Art. You must really enjoy it."
    b. "Look at that nice report card. You're getting as smart as your sister. But I know you can do even better."

3. Bill cleans up his room. It's not perfect, but quite an improvement.

    a. "What a fantastic room cleaner you are."
    b. "Thanks for cleaning your room. It looks a lot better."

4. Tom, age nine, brings home a stool he made at Scouts. The paint job is especially neat, even if the pieces are not perfectly straight.

    a. "What a nice stool. I especially like the color and the neat paint job."
    b. "You're a terrific carpenter!"

Answers: 1. b 2. a 3. b 4. a

APPRECIATING YOUR CHILD

How can you start using the Language of Acceptance more frequently? The first thing to do is decide what to STOP saying and doing. Then you can decide what to start saying and doing. So, if you have been negative about behavior you do not want, stop doing that and instead show appreciation for the behavior you DO want. Examine the following parent-child relationships and see what is wrong. Change the "solution" and "put-down" messages to the Language of Acceptance.

1. Child: Dad! Dad! Hey! I got two A's!
   Dad: How many times do I have to tell you not to slam the door?

   ____

   ____

The parent needs to stop criticizing, ordering, or preaching about the door slamming. He gave a "put-down" message. The parent should respond to what the child is happy about, enjoy and appreciate the child's accomplishments, and show appreciation for the two A's.

What parents think of as a little thing can be a mighty big thing to a child. When parents ignore accomplishments, they lose some very satisfying moments. Look at a more appreciative response.

Dad! Dad! Hey, I got two A's!
Great, come on up. Let's take a look at your report card.

If the door slamming is a problem, the child should be told why it is a problem. For example, "The noise of the door slamming really bugs me." Avoid ordering, "Do not slam the door."

2. Child: "Mom, I'm home from the store."
   Mom: "I hope you got everything."

The parent needs to stop judging and jumping to the conclusion that the child forgot something. The parent needs to show appreciation for what the child did. She should let the child know she is happy the child is home safely. The parent should check the bag before accusing him of forgetting something. If the child did forget something, the natural result of forgetting the item is not being able to have it. If it is something important, the child should be sent back to get it, again without the parent getting angry.

3. Child: "Hi Dad. I'm almost through with the lawn."
   Dad: "Just don't forget to sweep off the walk."

Dad should stop judging or jumping to the conclusion that the child will not sweep the walk and assuming that he needs to be told to do it. A better response would be: "I feel proud when the lawn looks so nice. Thanks so much for doing the lawn."

When your child does something for you, most likely you are freed to do something else. Let your child know what you were able to do and, if possible, how this helped the family. For example, "Because you did the lawn, I will be able to paint the kitchen for Mom, and that means we will have a beautiful lawn and a nicer looking kitchen." If you return later and find that the walk has been forgotten, you can say, "Gee—there sure is a lot of grass on the sidewalk. It really ruins the effect." Or you could say, "Please go sweep the grass off the sidewalk. The rest of the lawn looks so nice it is a shame to ruin the looks with grass on the sidewalk." Again, do not get angry. Yes, you may be angry because this is the twentieth time he has forgotten. You do need to remember that this new approach takes time to work. You may need to keep reminding yourself to try a new technique. A sign on the refrigerator may help you remember.

ATTACKING THE PROBLEM, NOT THE CHILD

Attacking the problem and not the child is another area where we need to switch from the Language of Unacceptance to the Language of Acceptance.

Being a parent is not easy. It can be very difficult to teach your child the things she will need to know to get along in this world. In most cases, you have taught your child many things before the age of five and the basics by eight. After that, you are only reinforcing what you have already taught. Sometimes you think you are still teaching your child by correcting her. This is usually seen by your child as attacking HER instead of the problem.

When you constantly correct your child, she may feel that she cannot do anything right and may even stop trying because she is afraid to make mistakes. Often when your child makes mistakes, like spilling something she is pouring, it is because of poor judgment due to a lack of experience. Because she is probably already upset by her mistakes, yelling or scolding her is like hitting a man when he is down and "only adds insult to injury."

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Examine the following parent-child interactions and see how a parent could attack the problem instead of the child.

1. Kathy, a five-or six-year-old, just spilled some cake and ice cream on her new birthday dress.
   Mom: "Oh, Kathy, that's your new birthday dress. You are so clumsy."

The mother should stop calling names and shaming the child. Kathy already feels terrible about spilling in front of her friends at the party. She should not be made to feel that she is the problem. Can you tell what the problem really is? Take a minute and describe what you feel it is on the lines below.

____

____

Here are some possible answers: The dress is dirty and needs to be cleaned. It may even stain. The floor needs to be cleaned. There is not enough cake and ice cream to go around. Parents are embarrassed because of the child's accident. The child is embarrassed.

This could be turned into a teaching situation. We can teach children how to get the stain out. We can let the child help clean up the mess, but we should never shame our children in front of friends.

2. Umpire: "Strike one. Strike two. Strike three, you're out."
   Dad, to son who struck out: "Listen to your father. You've got to keep your eye on the ball. Can't you concentrate?"

The father should stop ordering or commanding. He should not imply that the child is not successful because he cannot concentrate. He should not take out his embarrassment on the child. Rather he should praise the child for having the courage to try. Decide what the real problem might be and write it on the lines below.

____

Maybe Dad needs to spend more time with the child playing ball. Why is the parent embarrassed? Helping the child clarify his feelings or at least letting the child know that you know how he feels, lets the child feel loved, for example, "You're really disappointed that you let the team down."

When we can let our children's successes and failures belong to them, as they rightfully do, our ego trips become fewer and we have no need to attack the child.

USING LABELS THAT SHOW LOVE

How a child thinks about herself is often determined by the label you put on her. When we use negative labels, a child will think negatively about herself. Children have a way of living up to their labels. Make a list of labels used on you when you were a child in the space below. Then list what you would like to have been called instead.

Labels That Hurt Me As A Child:

____

____

What I Would Like To Have Heard Instead:

____

____

PRAISE THE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Suppose your child has made a beautiful model of a boat but delays cleaning up the mess he made while making the boat.You should praise the accomplishment, whatever it is. Frequently children do not clean up to parents' satisfaction. However, rather than labeling them messy, see what you can honestly praise about their achievements. "That's a beautiful boat. You're sure good with your hands." This builds up the child's self-concept instead of tearing it down. If the mess still needs to be cleaned up, explain to your child why you need the mess cleaned up. "We're going to have company tonight and I'd really like the house to look especially neat. I could sure use some help."

Rather than use a label that hurts in anger or frustration, wait until a time when you can use a label that shows love. Perhaps later you can tell your son how nice it is to have him in the family because he is so creative and takes initiative to do things for himself.

If you can use the Language of Acceptance, your relationships at home will improve. As you practice using these rules, keep the following poem in mind.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

Dorothy Law Nolte

Practice using labels of love with your children and other family members. You will begin to see improvements in feelings and self-concepts right away.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet will be about love. How much is too much? How can we let our children know we love them?

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 502 Parenting Renewal

NURTURANCE: BUILDING A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

LEAFLET 4 IN A SERIES OF 9

In this leaflet you will:

- learn ways to affirm and nurture children,
- become aware of ways to build children's self-esteem,
- learn ways to develop children's respect for self and others,
- practice ways to encourage children, and
- understand the emotional development of the five- to twelve-year-old child.

INTRODUCTION TO LEAFLET

Each of us at times feels rejected, discouraged, powerless, and unloved. In every person's mind there is a conflict between positive beliefs and their opposites. However, for the person with high self-esteem, doubts and fears are like shadows that pass through the mind. They may dim the person's sense of worth without casting it in darkness. In general, high self-esteem means that a person feels more self-respect than self-hate, more hope than despair, more courage than fear, more love than indifference.

This leaflet will help you learn how to nurture children. You will learn ways to help your children develop self-esteem and respect for other people. Resources to help develop these two factors in children will be discussed.

NURTURANCE

Sometimes life seems to be like a crazy quilt. Other times it may seem like the "Lone Star" pattern; while at other rare times we may feel that the pieces fit together well. Amid all the changes, nurturance from a parent helps the child fit the bits and pieces of life together.

Relationships within our families can become stressed at times, while at other times our relationships, the pieces of the fabric of our life, flow toward peace as we feel nurtured and affirmed.

"Nurture" means to help people grow by giving them affectionate care and attention. "Affirm" means to tell of positive feelings for a person.

"Affirmation"—words that say, "I care," "You are special," "You are important to me"—are comments that make you feel positive about yourself. People are loyal and move towards those who give positive comments. Family members need to continually affirm one another to develop, maintain, and nurture healthy self-esteem.

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WAYS YOU RECEIVE NURTURANCE AND AFFIRMATION

Make a list below of things that help you feel nurtured and affirmed as a special, unique individual.

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____

____

____

Would these same things make your child feel nurtured and affirmed?

Yes____No____

What are other ways that we can show our children that they are nurtured and affirmed?

____

____

____

You may ask, "How can I nurture my child?" There are three essential ways that may seem so simple that we often do not see them. Even as adults, we will not thrive without eye contact, focused attention, and physical contact.

When you first think about it, eye contact may seem unimportant in relating to your child. However, in working with children, watching parents and children talk, and studying research findings, we realize how essential eye contact is. Eye contact is crucial in filling the child's emotional needs. A child uses eye contact with his parents to feed emotionally. The more parents make eye contact with their child to express their love, the more a child feels nourished.

What is eye contact? It is looking directly into the eyes of another person. Have you ever tried to talk with someone who keeps looking in another direction, unable to maintain eye contact with you? It is difficult. Our feelings toward the other person are often affected by this, too. We like people who are able to maintain pleasant eye contact with us and distrust those who do not. Eye contact is pleasant, of course, when it comes with kind words and a smile.

Parents often use eye contact to give other messages to their child. Sometimes parents may give loving eye contact only under certain conditions. An example is when a child performs well or brings pride to his parents. This is not a nurturing expression; it is conditional. A child cannot grow and develop well under conditional love. He must have praise and affection just for being himself.

Focused attention is different from eye contact. You can have great eye contact with your child and be thinking about something else. Focused attention means being totally concentrated on your child and what he is saying.

Physical contact with parents helps children grow into warm and caring people. Someone has written that several hugs a day are necessary for the emotional well-being of each human.

KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT

Research in child development tells us how most children behave in various age groups. Lists of general patterns that occur in a child's emotional development follow. You may find that your child's behavior traits sometimes occur "on target." Sometimes their behavior traits may occur before or after the ages given. Remember, the list is only a guide. Each child is unique and special in her own way.

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD

_____ blames nearest person for own misdeeds
_____ likes to help mother
_____ may become angry and cry if corrected
_____ decides quickly what she wants
_____ likes to please adults
_____ is concerned about whether playmates are good or bad
_____ is not interested in money
_____ may do chores in return for allowance
_____ has pride and interest in clothes
_____ understands and respects rules
_____ likes to be told what to do
_____ may refuse to do a task if she is too busy

THE SIX-YEAR-OLD

_____ is highly active
_____ dislikes losing
_____ usually is not modest
_____ works in spurts
_____ is self-centered
_____ seeks to be the center of attention
_____ has positive attitude toward school
_____ is proud of self and skills
_____ may be more ready to dish out than receive criticism
_____ is competitive with brothers and sisters
_____ shows sensitivity about being called names, but calls others names
_____ often pairs up and has best friend; tends to enjoy leaving out a third child

THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is active
_____ likes to know limits
_____ sees teacher as guide
_____ is less impulsive than the younger child
_____ worries about being liked
_____ complains of unfair treatment by playmates
_____ listens as well as talks at mealtime
_____ enjoys activities alone as well as with others
_____ relates better to brothers and sisters, but this depends on age
_____ is very sensitive to reactions of others
_____ has feelings of shame often centered on the body
_____ sees end result as more important than "route"

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

_____ is outgoing
_____ enjoys dramatic play
_____ is often demanding of parents
_____ has curiosity about nature, things, and people
_____ talks with adults rather than to adults
_____ is curious
_____ likes to help when in the mood
_____ is judgmental and critical both of self and others
_____ seeks new experiences; tries out things
_____ has attitude toward opposite sex that is a combination of attraction and hostility

_____ discovers parents are human and make mistakes
_____ often is more polite away from home than at home
_____ begins to select friends on basis of qualities or for a reason

THE NINE-YEAR-OLD

_____ is gaining self-confidence
_____ quarrels less
_____ perfects motor skills
_____ becomes more inner directed
_____ is less demanding of parent's attention
_____ likes organized play with very definite rules
_____ has bursts of emotion and impatience
_____ accepts failures and mistakes more realistically
_____ tries to give impression of being calm and steadfast
_____ is becoming selective in activities and will spend time with them
_____ may start puberty spurt of growth (girls)

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is helpful
_____ likes and enjoys friends
_____ begins to agree logically
_____ has individual interests that are long lasting
_____ has motor skills that are fairly well developed
_____ enjoys ability to "fit in" at home, school, and play
_____ has good relation with parents, teachers, and friends
_____ enjoys organized activities and has secret groups, codes, etc.
_____ seems to be at peace with self and the world (calm and self-confident)
_____ shows concern and cares about others
_____ begins development of special motor skills (sports, music, dancing, handcrafts)

THE ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is very active
_____ eats more
_____ at times can be loud, boorish, and rude
_____ at times defies adult authority
_____ tends to be moody, sensitive
_____ may be cooperative, friendly, lively, and pleasant with strangers
_____ has frequent arguments with parents
_____ selects friends because of mutual interests
_____ is changing interest in the opposite sex

THE TWELVE-YEAR-OLD

_____ is outgoing, enthusiastic for short periods
_____ has extreme emotions - either really likes something or really hates it
_____ believes he/she no longer a child
_____ is less self-centered
_____ is placing emphasis on "best friend"
_____ can be critical of physical appearance (girls more so)
_____ sometimes has difficulty accepting praise
_____ participates less in family activities
_____ talks frequently of the opposite sex
_____ is restless, often day dreams, and "fools around" in school

Keep in mind that ALL children develop at different rates. You may provide extra opportunities and activities in areas where your child's behavior is different from the suggested age.

As you help your child to reach the goals that you and she set for her, be sure that you discipline in a positive and moderate way. This will help your child do what is right because she wants to, not out of fear of punishment.

PLANNED TIME TOGETHER

One significant quality among strong families discovered by researcher Dr. Nick Stinnett was a consistent flow of appreciation among family members. This means that families need to take time to participate in choosing activities they would like to do together during the year. The following activities might be helpful to your family. Try them!

FAMILY FUN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Materials Needed:
Decorated coffee can
Colored construction paper
3- by 3-inch cardboard patterns, one for each family member
Scissors
Pencils

In this activity all members of the family are encouraged to participate in choosing what activities they would like to do during the coming year.

- During the first week of the New Year (or the first week of this activity), place a colorfully decorated coffee can near the kitchen table. Label it "Family Fun Throughout the Year."
- Give each member of the family a different colored piece of paper, scissors, pencils and a 3-by 3-inch cardboard pattern. Children younger than five years old may need help.
- Trace the square pattern five times on the construction paper and cut out the squares.
- On each square, have each person write a family activity that they would like to do on "Family Fun" night. Drop the slips of paper in the container.
- Each week, draw one activity from the container. The person whose color was selected helps direct the chosen activity. That person does not get another turn until all the other colors have been chosen. This method gives every individual a turn to choose an activity and adds mystery and excitement to the evening.
- Refill the coffee can with new cards when all the suggestions have been used.

MACMOTHER COUPONS

Make a list of all the activities the family can do together that require little money. One single parent that we know invented the idea of "MacMother Coupons" for her three children as a low cost, but thoughtful Christmas gift. This is what she did. Each child received a large brown paper envelope decorated with colored markers and stickers and his own name as well as the title "MacMother Coupons." Inside each envelope were index cards, each listing a special activity for the child to "redeem" at some point in the year. The mother reported that the children did not think they would like the idea at first but grew to love having their own special coupons! Ideas for the coupons included: extra story at bedtime; a friend to stay over on an agreeable night; trip to the library or museum; a favorite meal on an agreeable night; a long discovery walk "without brother and sister" along; free hugs! Most of the activities would have been done throughout the year anyway. The coupons gave the children a sense of control in planning and "spending" them. The coupon idea also gave the single parent a feeling of joy in sharing the special gift of self and a sense of relief that she could make memories by sharing time and not money.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem affects young people's behavior and attitudes. Children who have high self-esteem and who have found healthy ways to be nurtured by family and friends are ready for the future. They believe in themselves and feel competent. A child's self-esteem begins to develop very early. As a child grows to school age, self-esteem can be hurt by people in the home or outside the home.

Children today face many challenges as they grow up. The most common childhood disorder is depression, which affects between 5 and 10 percent of youth. Researchers also have found that adolescents in trouble have little self-esteem.

What is "self-esteem?" Self-esteem is the value we place on what we believe to be true about ourselves. Self-esteem involves the following sequence of thinking and feeling:

1. We have beliefs about ourselves and our relationships;
2. We place a value on these beliefs;
3. We experience a positive feeling about what we think is true of ourselves.

The following example illustrates how a child's esteem can be damaged by what he thinks a parent thinks or feels about him.

A child between five and twelve may believe that his parents do not love him if the parents cannot spend much time with him. "I must be awful," he concludes. "I'm just a nobody; how could anyone ever love somebody like me?" Such a child may have some anger at his parents for not taking time with him. Most of his anger will be turned inward. Self-hate is often at the core of low self-worth. Children without self-esteem believe there is something wrong with them.

MY BELIEFS ABOUT MYSELF

This activity may help you determine your self-esteem as a parent. It is important for you to have high self-esteem as you deal with the challenges you face in parenting. List at least five things you believe about yourself. Think about how you feel about the ones you list. You may like some, dislike others, and feel neutral about the others on your list. If you could add up all of your reactions to everything you believe about yourself, you would be learning about your self-esteem.

Five beliefs about myself:	How I feel about these beliefs:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM BELIEFS

List three things your child does that you can trace back to your beliefs.

___

___

___

What are three unpleasant or harmful actions of your child that may have been influenced by your beliefs?

___

___

___

Think about what might be going through your child's mind at the time? How does your child feel about herself? How has this self-image affected other aspects of her life? These actions have been influenced by your beliefs.

BELIEFS: ("IF IT IS TO BE, IT IS UP TO ME.")

Directions: Circle A or B, the statement most closely related to your beliefs about yourself.

A. I'm as smart as anyone.
B. Most people are smarter than I am.

A. I am good looking.
B. I am ugly.

A. I feel good most of the time.
B. I feel bad a lot of the time.

A. I am in control over my life.
B. I am unlucky most of the time.

A. I try to improve things when they are not going well.
B. Nothing I try to do ever makes a difference.

If you circled mostly "B" choices, then your self esteem could be improved. Can one raise his or her own self-esteem? Perhaps this illustration might help us discover the answer. It's a little like putting seed in the ground. The seed has to do the growing. Without nurturing with water, sun, and nutrients, the seed will wither and die. A child of five to twelve will "do the growing." His growth and self-esteem will be nurtured by the liberal sprinkling of praise, fairness, kindness, and love.

A young child needs nurturing from someone else to begin raising self-esteem. However, the self-esteem of adults can not only be improved by others, but an adult can improve his own self-esteem. Ways to do this include positive self talk, trying harder and achieving, and doing things to help other people.

RESPECT

We owe each other respect. We cannot expect to be respected if we do not respect others around us. When we respect others, we respect their property and personal belongings as well as their self-esteem. Respect is a way of showing support for and cooperation with each other.

Can you imagine a ship where crew members did not respect each other's personal belongings or their ability to do the job? The ship would soon stop working because of the confusion. In a family we live in close quarters, like a ship's crew. Respect for each other is one of the things that keeps chaos from breaking out. When we grow in respect for each other's abilities, property, and self-esteem, we soon see how valuable each member of our crew really is. As you model respect for yourself and others, your child will become more respectful.

PEOPLE I RESPECTED

Think back to your childhood about an adult whom you respected and admired. As you recall this person, think about what this person was like. List the qualities of this person below.

____

____

____

FEARS

Fear exists. It has been necessary for survival since the beginning of time. It lets people know that danger is near. Folklore from around the world is full of tales of heroes who have no fear. However, fear is present everyday in the lives of children. Fear is an emotion that is necessary in a child's development.

The fears that children experience as part of their daily living can affect their lives. Children's fears vary according to their age and individual differences. To help children cope with fears, a number of books that deal with fear are available. They can be used with children to overcome, to reduce, or to eliminate their fears.

We all have had butterflies in our stomachs. It happens on the first day of school, before a test, or on a new job. A school-age child's fears often center around performance in the classroom. Fear happens most anytime we try something new or risky. "If you have butterflies in your stomach, ask them into your heart" (Cooper Edens).

Such "butterflies" make us feel nervous, and sometimes we wish we could just go back to bed. The best thing we can do, and sometimes the only thing, is go right ahead and walk into that situation with head held high. We will probably feel awkward at first. That is natural and it will pass. Our nervousness can change into excitement and joy for what we are doing. We can begin to feel proud when we walk through our fear. This means thinking about each step of what you are afraid to do.

It is a true accomplishment when we do not let our fear stop us—when, instead, we let the butterfly in our hearts unfold. As a parent, you must experience the butterflies before you can explain them to your child. You must be able, on occasion, to go right ahead with a new experience in spite of the butterflies. You must be able to do this before you can coach your child to do so.

Speaking words of encouragement is a good way to help build up someone who is fearful or lacks confidence. Critical comments may lower your child's self- esteem, destroy her ideas, and keep her bound in the fear that she cannot do anything right. As parents, we may find it important to remember this old Japanese proverb when dealing with our children, "One kind word can warm up three winter months."

ENCOURAGING COMMENTS

The comments below are encouraging and positive. Circle the comments that you would like to use when speaking to other members of your family. If you can think of other comments, list them. Along with positive comments, you might want to include some gestures of affection. Try a pat on the head or shoulder or an arm around a shoulder or waist. A hug or a kiss is appropriate, too!

You've got it made.
You've just about mastered that!
You're on the right track.
OUTSTANDING!
You are very good at that.
You did very well.
That's much better!
FANTASTIC!
I'm happy to see you working like that.
I knew you could do it.
GREAT!
You're doing a good job.
Now you have it!
That's the best you have ever done.
Now you've figured it out.
____
____
____

SUMMARY

Parents affect their child's self-esteem in many ways. This leaflet has led us to think about some of these ways.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet will be about your child's education. You will learn how you can work with the school to help your child succeed in school.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND REFERENCES

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 503 Parenting Renewal

EDUCATION: HELPING PREPARE THE CHILD FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL

LEAFLET 5 IN A SERIES OF 9

One purpose of this leaflet is to encourage you to help your child become successful in school. Another purpose is to help you become involved in your child's school. Research shows that most successful adults have been successful in elementary and middle school. Parents can have a very important effect on the child's success in school.

This leaflet contains guidelines for parents that focus on helping children succeed in school by:

- getting off to a good start,
- developing good study habits,
- enjoying reading,
- respecting those who are different,
- making and keeping friends,
- making the most of television,
- respecting school property and those responsible, and
- being spontaneous and creative.

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

The first day of school is a milestone in your child's life. Your understanding at this "turning point" is important to the child's future attitude toward school and to his or her healthy growth and development.

Experts in child mental health and development emphasize that you, the parent, can play an important role in starting your child off with the self- confidence needed throughout life. This self-confidence is built upon good feelings about parents and family, about authority figures at school, and about other children. Most important, however, is a sound self-concept.

Here are some things for you to keep in mind:

1. Recognize that the day your child first goes off to school is an important event. Realizing this can help you make it a positive experience. It may be the first major separation from the secure and familiar world of home and family, and it marks entrance into a new universe of friendship, learning, and adventure—a world that parents can never again entirely share. The greatest gift to your child is loving support and understanding and time to listen to his experiences in the "new world" of school.

2. Remember that learning to like school and liking to learn are closely related. Your child's first school experience can contribute to a good or bad attitude toward school in the years ahead.

3. Be prepared to handle your own feelings. Many children do very well on the first day, and it is the parent who experiences adjustment difficulties. The independence parents have taught their children becomes vividly clear and startles many parents.

4. Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect and answering all questions honestly. Children need to know the number of days and length

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of time they will be in school, as well as how to get there and back. A child may be anxious and needs to know details to handle the stress involved. Employed mothers and fathers should make certain that the child knows the arrangements for before- and after-school care.

5. Convey a positive attitude about school. If the parents show enthusiasm for what the school experience can mean, the child is more likely to look forward to it.

6. Make transportation plans clear. If the child is to walk to school, walk the route together a few times before and after school starts. If there are other children from your neighborhood who are the same age, see if they can walk together. If a child goes to school by bus, help the child identify the vehicle. Encourage older children to watch over younger ones. Once the bus arrives, be direct; say goodbye and allow the child to board alone. If the child cries, try not to overreact; in most cases the tears will soon disappear.

7. Create a normal, routine atmosphere at home the first few days of school. Do not deny or avoid the uniqueness of the situation, but take an active interest in what your child tells you about school when she comes home. Be a good listener, allowing your child time to talk about the school day.

EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

Make a list of new experiences your child can expect at school (Examples are: snacks and lunches, safety practices, respect for the rights of others.) How can you help your child prepare for these?

EXPERIENCES	WAYS TO HELP MY CHILD PREPARE
____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________
____________________	____________________

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

List on the lines below materials, advice, and knowledge that you have already provided your child that will help make her school experience a success.

____

____

DEVELOPING GOOD STUDY HABITS

Developing good study habits is a must if your child is to be successful in school. You as a parent can do several things to ensure your child's good study habits. First, make a quiet, cozy, and private space for your child to study. See that the right study tools, such as dictionary, pencils, pencil sharpener, rulers, and paper, are there. See that the lighting is correct for reading and that the TV and radio are turned off when the child is studying.

The second thing you can do to help your child develop good study habits is to foster a good attitude about studying. One set of parents set aside one hour every night when all family members either studied or read something to increase their knowledge. Then everyone came together for a bedtime snack and shared what they had learned for the past hour. Your family may not be able to set aside that much time, but some time would be helpful.

GOOD ATTITUDES ABOUT STUDYING

List ways to help your child develop good attitudes about studying.

Some ideas follow. Take your child on a special shopping trip for school supplies. Read and discuss what you read with your child. Take a course yourself and let your child see that you enjoy studying. Treat learning as something fun to do.

There are other things you can do to help your child develop good study habits. You can help him learn to make a set of goals for each time he studies. You can teach him how to outline a chapter or write a set of questions and answers for each chapter. He should do more than the teacher requires. One fifth grader looked the spelling words up in the dictionary. She wrote down the definitions, but did not learn how to use the words in a sentence. She thought she had studied enough because that was all the teacher required.

ENJOYING READING

Children learn what is important by watching their parents. Encourage your child to read and let him see you read. If you read regularly, your child will understand that reading is important and worth doing. Reading to the child is fun for both of you. Listening to a parent read helps the child learn about raising and lowering his voice and pausing for punctuation. As soon as the child masters enough words to read a simple primer, let the child read aloud and "show off." Cheer like crazy.

Books help people learn how to: deal with grief, solve problems, cook, be safe, deal with anger, deal with fears of all sorts, and much, much more.

BOOKS HELP US LEARN

What else can we learn from books? List other things we can learn from books.

GOOD BOOKS

Write the name of a good book you have shared with your child. Tell what you liked about the book and what it taught your child.

Or

Go to the library with your child and choose a book you can both read and then discuss with each other.

RESPECTING THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

In the early years, parents have the greatest influence and most opportunities to shape children's environments. This is a good time to encourage a variety of experiences, for example: chances to interact with boys and girls and also with children of varying ages, cultures, and backgrounds. We want our children to learn to feel comfortable with others somewhat unlike themselves. Talk to your child about differences with which he may come in contact. Stress that being different is okay. Being different is something that everyone must face at one time or another. The fact is that no two people are alike. Here are a few examples of differences:

Race: Race is a noticeable difference. No one race is superior to another. Your child may ask "Why is she one color and I'm another?" Let your child know that being different in race is only a color factor.

Handicap: Your child may see someone in a wheelchair. Naturally, the child will stare. Let your child know that a handicapped person can still perform to the best of her ability and can be a worthwhile person.

Weight and Size: Children often tease each other about size. Help your child learn that people come in different shapes and sizes, and these differences are okay.

PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

Share a story with your child about someone you have known who was laughed at because she was different.

Or

Read or tell the story of the "Ugly Duckling" to your child and explain why the ugly duckling was discriminated against.

MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

If we listen to children, we realize that they feel their friendships are very important. Making friends, playing with friends, fighting and making up, and sometimes even losing friends occupies a large portion of children's time and attention. Children's relationships with one another provide opportunities for learning that are different from those provided by parents and teachers.

Adults' relationships with children often are very warm and friendly, but they tend to focus on protecting and caring for the children and guiding them toward becoming more grown-up. Children think of adults as all-powerful and all-knowing, rather than as individuals with strengths and weaknesses. Because adults control resources that children want and because adults approve or disapprove of their behavior, children try to gain adults' approval.

In relationships with their peers, children can make equal contributions and can participate in setting standards of behavior. They engage in discussion, bullying, negotiation, and compromise to reach agreement in their play. Through these interactions, children discover ways they are alike and ways they are different from one another. They come to recognize that they are not equals in all ways, though they have much in common.

Through peer relationships and friendships, children learn what adults cannot teach them, namely social skills. These include techniques for making and maintaining contact, for communicating effectively, and for dealing with conflicts. Adults can serve as useful advisers and models of these skills, but children need equals with whom to experiment and practice.

WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD GAIN AND KEEP FRIENDS

How can you help your child make and keep friends? Write several ways on the blank lines below.

____

____

Did you think of these? Let your child have a birthday or spend-the-night party. Take your child to Sunday Church School to meet schoolmates in a different setting. Share a book about friendship with your child.

MAKING THE MOST OF TELEVISION

In its short lifetime, television has become a big influence on the human family. Television's negative impact on children's reading habits - and therefore their thinking - has been enormous.

Television has been described as the "plug-in drug," and not without reason. Its control of children is demanding and extensive. It will largely determine what they wear and what they will not wear, what they eat and what they will not eat, what they play and what they will not play, what they will read and what they will not read. Our children must be taught in the home and in the classroom how to cope with television. They must be taught to control it instead of letting it control them.

One problem with watching television and playing video games all afternoon and evening is that children do not learn to generate activities. They just sit passively. How will these children perform as adults if they have no initiative?

Children today are not getting enough exercise if they sit in school all day and watch television all afternoon. Wise parents will encourage physical activities every day after school.

On the other hand, television does not have to be a totally negative influence. As a tool for educating, informing, and entertaining, it has unlimited potential. Unfortunately, current programming devotes itself almost exclusively to entertaining, thereby falling far short of its potential.

TELEVISION AND YOUR FAMILY

Viewing television can be educational. Below you will find a list of ways to use television to enhance the education of your child. Place a check mark beside the ways you intend to try in the future.

____ Watch a program together. Then, ask the child questions like: "What would you have done in that case?" "What did he do wrong?" These help children form judgmental skills.

____ Allow your child to watch only programs that you carefully select.

____ Limit the total time your child watches television and insist upon physical exercise every day.

____ Allow your child to watch programs that are strictly for entertainment as rewards for school work well done.

RESPECTING SCHOOL PROPERTY AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE

Learning to obey school rules will help your child learn to operate in other systems that have rules. Organizations, places of business, and society in general have rules that we must obey even if we do not always agree with the rules.

Help your child learn to respect the janitor, the lunch room worker, the principal, and teachers. This does not mean that you should make your child afraid to speak out or to ask questions. Rather teach your child good manners by setting a good example. At home, wait until someone finishes talking before you begin. Say "please" and "thank you." Talk in a quiet tone of voice. Stand up when someone older than you enters the room. Show respect to all human beings and calmly and firmly insist upon these behaviors from your child.

GOOD MANNERS

Make a list of other good manners that will help your child succeed in school.

Did you think of these? Wait until someone finishes talking before talking, do not burp out loud, and do not cough on others. Hold the door open for others.

BEING SPONTANEOUS AND CREATIVE

Spontaneity and creativity are important talents your child may have. Help the child to understand that his talents are a gift and that he should create with these talents. Encourage the child to volunteer to use his talents as often as possible.

Your child may be creative with words, art, or music. The child may wish to explore and try new songs, new subjects, or new ways of becoming creative. Always praise your child for creativity. Two ways to foster creativity are to supply the needed tools and to give the child free time and space to create.

PROMOTING CREATIVITY

List ways of promoting creativity in your child.

Did you think of these? Avoid providing all the answers. Give your child free time. Tell him his ideas are good, if they are. Let him help decide. Avoid laughing at what he makes or builds. Say "That was a good idea, if - - -." Praise accomplishments.

BECOMING PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Your child's education can be greatly enriched by your involvement in her school. In these times of less money, schools need parents' support more than ever. Although some schools are not used to giving parents meaningful things to do, your interest can change this. By expressing your interest, respect, and good will, you and the school can work together for the benefit of the children.

Both teachers and parents need support and recognition. Have you told your child's teacher what you appreciate about his or her work? Why not write a note to your child's teacher?

COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATION

You can become involved in your child's school experience by helping the teacher. Try to put yourself in the shoes of a teacher receiving the two phone calls described here.

"Hello, Mrs. Williams? This is Serena Taggart, Becky's mother. I wanted to let you know right off this fall that I'm delighted that you have Becky interested in science projects. Yesterday she asked if I could take her to the library this weekend to see their exhibit on the planets....I have an idea I'd like to talk over with you. Is this a good time?....Oh, good. I was thinking that the students might learn a lot from making papier-mache models of the planets and hanging them from the ceiling of the classroom. I work in a doctor's office and have Wednesday afternoons off. I could come in Wednesday afternoons for the next month and help with this project if you think it would fit in with what they're learning."

"Hello, Mrs. Williams, this is Jean Taylor, Andy's mother. I'm really upset about the math grade you gave Andy on his midyear report card. The math papers he has been bringing home all year seem to have a lot of mistakes on them. This cannot go on any longer. I can come in every morning and drill the students with flash cards.....What do you mean you do not use flash cards anymore? They worked when I was in school, and I know my times tables!"

Which approach is best? Why?____

____

SUMMARY

This lesson was about helping your child succeed in school. You must determine how you will use what you have learned in this leaflet.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet is about health and wellness of children. There is more to it than you may think!

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 504 Parenting Renewal

WELLNESS: NUTRITION, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

LEAFLET 6 IN A SERIES OF 9

This leaflet will help you:
- recognize signs of healthy children,
- become aware of health practices,
- identify common causes of accidents,
- describe safety practices, and
- plan meals for young children that follow the Guide to Healthy Food Choices.

The goal of this lesson is to develop good health habits in your child that will carry over into adulthood.

Wellness is the process of becoming and staying healthy. One needs to take personal responsibility for health and practice a healthy lifestyle. One of the goals of effective parenting is to help the child reach and maintain her best levels of physical, emotional, and social health. Signs of good health usually can be seen in appearance, vitality, and the absence of frequent illnesses. We will consider nutrition first.

NUTRITION

During these early years you have some control over what your child eats. You can guide your child into a pattern of eating that can shape her likes and dislikes and the types of nutrients she will eat.

Children learn by example. They imitate adults whom they admire. If you eat a variety of foods, they will too.

NUTRITION IN THE EARLY YEARS

Nutrient needs change steadily throughout life. They vary from individual to individual, depending on the rate of growth, sex, previous nutrition, health history, and many other factors.

To provide all the needed nutrients, a variety of foods from each of the food groups is recommended. To estimate serving size for meats, fruits, and vegetables, a serving is loosely defined as one tablespoon per year of age. Thus, at five years of age, a serving of any of these foods would be five tablespoons. Because the serving size adjusts as the child grows older, this rule of thumb is appropriate until the teen years.

During the day, the average child up to age ten or so needs to eat every four to six hours. This helps to maintain a blood glucose concentration high enough to support the activity of the brain and the nervous system. A well-nourished child will be alert, energetic, and responsive to external stimuli. A good diet will include enough calories to assure a normal rate of growth and to provide for the energy needs of the body.

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A GUIDE TO HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

The Guide for Healthy Food Choices will help you make wise and varied food selections. It divides food into six major food groups according to the nutrients they contain.

The **Milk, Cheese, Yogurt Group** provides protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamins A and D, and riboflavin.

The **Meat, Poultry, and Fish Group** provides protein, thiamine, niacin, and iron.

Both the **Vegetable Group and Fruit Group** provide vitamins A and C, carbohydrates, and fiber.

The **Breads, Cereals, and Grains Group** provides carbohydrates, B vitamins, and iron.

The **Fats, Sweets, Sweetened Drinks, and Alcoholic Beverages Group** provides fat and carbohydrates.

CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

FOOD GROUP	SERVINGS PER DAY	COUNT AS A SERVING
Breads, Cereals, and Grains	6 or more	1 slice of whole-grain bread, 1/2 hamburger bun, 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin; 4-6 crackers; 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, grits, spaghetti, macaroni, or 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Make at least one-half of your servings whole grain.
Fruits	2 to 4	1 fresh, medium-size piece of fruit, such as an apple, banana, orange, grapefruit half, or melon wedge; 1/2 cup of juice; 1/2 cup cooked, canned, or frozen fruit; or 1/4 cup dried fruit. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Eat raw fruits as often as possible.
Vegetables	3 to 5	1/2 cup cooked or raw vegetables or 1 cup leafy raw vegetables, such as cabbage or spinach. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Eat raw vegetables as often as possible.
Meat, Poultry, and Fish	2 to 3	A serving of lean meat, poultry, or fish is 2 ounces. Serving sizes will differ. A piece of meat the size and thickness of the palm of a woman's hand is about 3-5 ounces; a man's palm, 5-7 ounces. Count 1 egg, 1/2

FOODGROUP	SERVINGS PER DAY	COUNT AS A SERVING
		cup cooked dried beans and peas, or 2 tablespoons peanut butter as 1 ounce of meat. Eat a variety of foods from this group.
Milk, Cheese, and Yogurt	Children (6-10 years) 3 Teens (11-18 years) 4	1 cup of buttermilk, skim, low-fat, or whole milk; 1 cup of plain or low-fat yogurt; 1 1/2 ounces of cheese; 2 slices of packaged cheese; 2 cups of low-fat cottage cheese; 1 3/4 cups of ice cream or frozen yogurt. Eat a variety of foods from this group.
Fats, Sweets, Sweetened Drinks, and Alcoholic Beverages		Limit fats, sweets, sodas, and other sweetened beverages. Choose liquid vegetable oil more often than solid fats and shortenings. Limit bacon and other high fat meats such as sausage and luncheon meats.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

The best beverage to have in your refrigerator for an afterschool snack is:

1. Milk
2. Carbonated beverage
3. Sweetened flavored drink like Kool-Aid

(The correct answer is 1 - Milk. Milk contains more vitamins and minerals.)

NUTRITION AT SCHOOL

The U.S. Government funds several programs to provide nutritious, high- quality meals for children at school. School lunches are designed to meet certain requirements. They must include specified servings of milk, protein-rich foods (meat, poultry, fish, cheese, eggs, legumes, or peanut butter), vegetables, fruits, and breads or other grain foods.

Many schools are trying to meet today's ideals of healthful food. They offer low-fat or non-fat milk instead of whole milk. Many schools offer salad bars, providing students an opportunity to create their own meal from a selection of nutritious foods.

TELEVISION'S INFLUENCE ON NUTRITION

In the United States, studies tell us children spend as much time watching television as they do attending school. Obesity increases for each hour of television viewing.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The total food eaten during the day is what one counts. So, if your child does not get all he needs in one meal, he can get it at another meal or in a snack.

NUTRIENT SUPPLEMENTS

With a balanced day's food intake, vitamin pills and other nutrient supplements usually are not necessary. In fact, taking them may give you more vitamins or minerals than you need. Too many vitamins and minerals can be unhealthy. For example, very large amounts of vitamin A can make your child sick. Supplements cannot be a substitute for a balanced diet because they do not provide all the nutrients that food does and they have no calories. Ask your child's doctor or a registered dietitian for advice about nutrient supplements.

OBESITY

Every day researchers learn more and more about adolescent obesity. Here are some helpful suggestions you can use with your family:

1. Teach children to eat slowly, to pause and enjoy their food, and to stop eating when they are full.
2. Allow children to determine their own limits at the table — what, when, and how much to eat, within reason.
3. Encourage physical activity on a daily basis to promote strong skeletal and muscular development and to form habits that will support good health throughout life.

DENTAL HEALTH

Adequate nutrition is needed to help the mouth and teeth develop properly. This means providing enough protein, calcium, vitamin C, vitamin D, and fluoride. Where local water supplies are not fluoridated, direct application of fluoride to the teeth at intervals may be necessary. Remember, we must restrict the sweet foods that cause tooth decay. This means brushing the teeth or rinsing the mouth with water after meals, avoiding snacks that contain sticky sweets, and dislodging persistent particles with dental floss. An appointment with a dentist should be made every six months for thorough cleaning and fluoride treatments as necessary.

Young people may be resistant to some of the practices they need to adopt to invest in their future. Remember, you are their most valuable teacher and role model. Developing healthful habits is easier than changing poor habits later.

PATHWAY TO A WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

Chances are that, as you achieve a wellness lifestyle, your children will also. A wellness lifestyle comes from first making an overall decision to lead a healthy life and then making smaller decisions along the way. Health habits begun in childhood stick with us. They may extend our lives and improve the quality of life while we are living.

How do your go from choosing a wellness lifestyle to having one? A well person manages to get his physical, emotional, and social needs met. While these needs are different for each person, the process for meeting them is the same.

Step 1 - Know yourself. For instance, you may need more sleep than someone else, or you may need to have more time to be alone than do your friends.

Step 2 - Set goals. Decide to go to bed at 10:00 p.m. so you can get enough sleep to feel good the next day. Decide to have some time to be alone.

Step 3 - Make a plan. You may need to rearrange some things, such as having dinner earlier or omitting one television program, to reach your goal.

Step 4 - Act on your plan. Your self-esteem will increase if you follow your plan. If you miss sticking to your plan at times, do not dwell on it. Just follow your plan the next day.

Step 5 - Check your results. If your plan works for you, GREAT! If not, think about why it is not working and try something else.

Most important, as a parent let your child watch you go through the process of making healthy decisions. When she was very young, you made health decisions for her. In middle childhood she will make some of them on her own. You are her best teacher, and you teach by example.

WELLNESS CHECKSHEET

Directions: Place a check by the good health characteristics your child has.

Physical Health: My child
______ is using daily hygiene habits.
______ seldom feels tired or run down.
______ gets eight-hours sleep each night.
______ regularly uses dental floss and a soft toothbrush.
______ exercises each day.
______ eats breakfast each day.
______ eats a variety of foods.
______ practices good posture.
______ eats regular meals.
______ makes wise choices for snacks.
______ goes to the doctor for an annual physical.
______ has had a DPT shot since four years of age.

Mental Health: My child
______ asks for help when needed.
______ is happy most of the time.
______ sometimes likes to be alone.
______ can name three things he does well.
______ feels okay about crying and allows himself to do so.
______ gives others sincere compliments.
______ accepts compliments.
______ listens to and thinks about constructive criticism.
______ can say no to people when appropriate without feeling guilty.
______ is satisfied with his effort if he has done his best.
______ expresses his thoughts and feelings to others.
______ has at least one hobby or interest to pursue and enjoy.

Social Health: My child
______ meets people easily.
______ is comfortable entering into conversation with new acquaintances.
______ continues to participate in an activity even though he does not get his way in an argument.
______ has at least one or two close friends.
______ can accept other people's ideas and suggestions.
______ can say no to his friends if they are doing something he does not wish to do.
______ can accept the differences in friends and classmates.
______ is comfortable carrying on conversation with an adult.
______ tries to work out problems with others.
______ avoids gossiping about people.
______ accepts rules in group activity.
______ accepts work responsibilities as well as play opportunities.

Adapted with permission from:
Duyff, R. L., Wichard, R. N., Hallman, J. P., & Reid, J. C. (1988). Family Health. California: Glenco.

Scoring

The highest possible score for each area is 12. If the score for your child is 10 to 12 in any area, his level of health and safety in that area is very good. A score of 7 to 9 is good, 4 to 6 is fair, and below 4 indicates a general area on which you and your child need to be working.

USING HEALTH SERVICES

Visit the doctor or health department for:

— Routine checkups such as annual examinations
— Immunizations
  Four- to six-year-olds get DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus) Thereafter, they get a TD (tetanus and diphtheria) every 10 years, or if they get a cut or scratch in between.
— Diagnostic tests - blood pressure, urinalysis, blood tests, and X-rays.

Be ready to tell the doctor the following:

— My child's symptoms are ______________________________
— They are brought on by ______________________________
— They get worse when ______________________________
— They go away when ______________________________
— He has been treated with ______________________________

MAINTAIN HEALTH RECORDS

Children under the age of consent (eighteen in South Carolina) should keep signed medical releases at school, with the doctor, and in the family health record. In this way, they can be treated in an emergency without waiting for their parents to get to the scene.

The family health record will include family name; father's and mother's occupation; family members' birthplaces and dates; physician's name, address, and phone; serious illnesses with date and treatment; immunizations with dates; allergies; insurance policies; and family medical history.

PREPARING FOR HOSPITAL STAY

When doctors recommend hospitalization for surgery, diagnostic tests, or treatments, there are some things patients should know.

Before agreeing to surgery, patients should find out as much as possible to avoid unnecessary surgery or surprises. A second opinion and alternatives should be explored. The doctors should also explain the procedures, the benefits and risks, how long the hospital stay might be, how long the recovery will be, and hospital fees. Children should be involved in the discussion as to what to expect throughout the hospital stay. A tour of the hospital would be helpful.

HOME, SAFE HOME

You and your family can live safely and reduce your risks of accidents and other personal hazards. The conscious choices about what you do, where you go, and how you do things affect the safety of your family.

Death and injury due to accidents for children ages five to twelve most often involve motor vehicles, drownings, recreational toys, falls, burns, and fires.

School-age children are very independent. They do most activities without adult supervision. They need to learn, understand, and obey safety rules on their own.

Children of this age may have chores to do around the home and yard. They must be instructed in the use of power equipment. Power machinery, such as lawn mowers and tractors, has the potential to be very dangerous. Children who use machinery must have very good instructions and be able to show their skill. Power machinery should never be considered a toy or used in a playful manner.

Five- to twelve-year-olds are very active. They can travel great distances in a short time on a bicycle, skateboard, or roller skates. They must have the right-size equipment and good safety instructions.

Occasionally children this age will not follow rules. Caregivers must be prepared to put away wheeled toys for a reasonable time. This will emphasize the serious risks of breaking rules about riding.

Teach children these bicycle safety rules:

. Never ride double.
. Ride single file.
. Ride with traffic.
. Walk bike across heavy traffic at a crosswalk.
. Lock bicycles.
. Use signals for every turn.
. Be sure bike has clean reflectors and lights that work.

In the park and on the playground, accidents often occur because of faulty equipment or misuse of equipment. Most of these victims are between the ages of five and ten. Accidents are often associated with falls from playground equipment, swings, climbing equipment, slides, and seesaws.

The exploring nature of five- to twelve-year-old children will lead them into unfamiliar places. Explain carefully and clearly that dumps and junkyards, underground holes, mine shafts, blasting sites, railroad property, abandoned structures, new construction sites, quarries, irrigation ditches, and excavation projects are always off limits. When they still want to explore, arrange family nature trips, tours, or visits to other areas of interest.

OUTINGS WITH CHILDREN

List some of the places you have taken your children and think of the dangers involved. How did you prevent accidents in dangerous situations?

____

____

DANGERS

In general, children under the age of ten cannot fully understand complicated traffic events. Traffic situations often mean children must hear, see, judge distance, and guess timing. They must also figure out what drivers will do. Accidents occur when children cross streets in the middle of the block, dart out into the street, and walk on the wrong side of the street. If your child must walk on the roadside, teach him to walk facing oncoming traffic and wear brightly colored clothing at night.

Another cause of death for the five- to twelve-year-old is fires. Playing with matches and smoking are two reasons for unexpected fires. It is best for adults to instruct children in proper use of matches. Strict rules should be set on where fires can be built with adult supervision. Never leave children alone in a room where there is a fire in a fireplace.

Children must know proper procedures for evacuating a burning building, the fire department phone number, and location. This is especially true when older children are responsible for younger children.

Children in this age group enjoy toys that fly, shoot, or come apart. They are often involved in projects where safe use of sewing equipment, leathercraft tools, woodburning tools, and chemistry sets is important. Use of these tools can be approved after the child shows knowledge and skill in use, care, and storage of equipment.

Great caution is important anytime a child plays with toys that fly or shoot. Gun use should be forbidden until a youth has good coordination and the maturity to control emotions without adult supervision. No youth should hunt before passing an approved hunter-safety course. Even toy guns with parts that can be shot out of the barrel can be very harmful if misused.

ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

. Children with flu or chicken pox should not be given aspirin.
. Ice or a very cold cloth will keep bruises from swelling too much. After a bad bump, if a child becomes very sleepy, is dizzy, or has a stiff neck, call a doctor immediately.
. For a mild burn or surface redness, cold water will take away the pain. For bad bruises, blisters, or skin burned away, get medical help right away. Cover the burn with a clean cloth bandage or gauze. Do not press it against the burn.
. Stay calm in an emergency. Keep children calm.
. Learn how to use CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and the Heimlich maneuver.
. Keep all plastic bags away from children, their toys, their play area, and their beds.
. Automobile accidents kill and hurt more children than any other type of accident. Always wear a seat safety belt when riding in a car, truck, or van. Special car-seat restraints should be used for children who weigh less than 40 pounds.
. Signs of shock are cold, clammy skin, pale face, chills, shallow breathing, nausea, or vomiting. Have victim lie down, feet elevated, unless this would make the injury worse. Keep victim lightly covered.
. The Skull and Crossbones sign means danger!
. The picture of Mr. Yuk means children should stay away because there is poison inside.
. When someone eats or drinks something poisonous, act quickly to get the poison out, or off, or to dilute it. Read the container label for first-aid instructions. First call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-922-1117 or your doctor. Have the container ready so you can read the label to the Poison Control Center helper. Have a one-ounce bottle of Syrup of Ipecac available in case the physician advises its use.
. Crawl low in a smoky room or hall. The air near the floor is better.
. Keep a list of telephone numbers to use in emergency situations by the telephone.

CORRECTING HAZARDS

List 10 hazards that could cause an accident or fire in your home, your school, or your church. Complete the chart below.

HAZARD	WAY YOU CORRECTED IT	DATE

Help your child draw a floor plan of your home and mark a fire escape route on the plan.

SUMMARY

Each day we make choices that influence our health and our children's health and safety. We make decisions about food, exercise, rest, hygiene. Each choice is important. All of our decisions add up. Together they affect our health now and even years from now. Developing healthful habits is easier than changing poor habits.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet will be on teaching your children about sexuality.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND REFERENCES

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AWARENESS: SEX EDUCATION

LEAFLET 7 IN A SERIES OF 9

PS 018620

As a result of studying this leaflet you will:

- identify some personal values, feelings, and attitudes about sex that you want to pass on to your children,
- understand your role in the sex education of your children, and
- determine how much to tell your children at different age levels.

Welcome to the Parenting Renewal leaflet on Awareness. We have chosen this title for the leaflet that covers sex education. Children in the middle childhood years notice the differences in sexes. They are noticing changes in their own bodies and feelings. This leaflet will help you become more aware of your own attitude about sex. It will also help you feel more comfortable passing your values about sex on to your children.

LEARNING ABOUT SEX

How did you learn about sex? Please write your answer on the space below.

____

____

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

Long ago the wise men of Greece wrote on one of their temples the motto "Know thyself." They believed that this understanding was necessary for a happy life. We think it is still good advice. Understanding ourselves is the key to understanding other people. Understanding ourselves as sexual human beings involves thinking about some of the values and attitudes about sex. Perhaps we have been taking these attitudes for granted all our lives. Understanding ourselves also helps us understand what attitudes and values we are passing on to our children.

Children learn language and behavior by day-to-day contact with parents. They learn attitudes and feelings about sex and sexuality the same way. The feelings that we have are affected by what we learned from our own parents. These feelings are passed from generation to generation. Of course, there are outside influences that color the values that children adopt. Some of these are relatives, teachers, and peers. Radio, TV, magazines, and newspapers also play an important part in forming values.

Sometimes we adopt the values of our parents or society without determining what we really feel and think about them.

IMPORTANT WORDS

Complete the bingo game on the next page.

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Directions: Place an "x" on the words that the definitions define. See if you can "Bingo."

__ The unborn child after the third month of conception

__ The mature male reproductive cell capable of fertilizing the female egg

__ The mature female reproductive cell capable of being fertilized

__ Containing unborn young within the body

__ Refers to the act of putting the penis in the vagina

__ A male sex organ outside the body

__ A canal in the female that leads from the uterus to the outside of the body

vagina	sperm	fallopian tubes	pregnant
ovary	penis	womb	sexuality
sexual intercourse	uterus	fetus	umbilical cord
chromosome	labor	sex	ovum

The answers are on page 5 along with definitions of the rest of the words.

Some of these words may make you feel uncomfortable. It is important to your child that you learn to think of the words that have to do with sexual development as usual terms. Think about why you feel uncomfortable using the words. You may find that you can now laugh at your own discomfort about these words. It will help to realize that everybody is at least a little embarrassed the first time they use words about sex.

MORE WORDS

Eight words or phrases dealing with sexuality are listed below. Differences of opinion may occur about these words. Not only do parents and children disagree about some of them, but also some members of our society will disagree. Write down your reactions when you read each of the words or phrases. Tell where these reactions came from.

REACTIONS **WHY DID YOU REACT IN THESE WAYS?**

Sexual intercourse

________________________ ________________________

Sex education in the school

________________________ ________________________

Nudity in the home

________________________ ________________________

Abortion

____________________ ____________________

Premarital sex

____________________ ____________________

Contraception

____________________ ____________________

Homosexuality

____________________ ____________________

Masturbation

____________________ ____________________

(If you do not know what the words mean, you may need to look them up in a dictionary. Other books and references are listed on the last page of this leaflet to help you.)

Values are learned from what a person experiences. This learning starts in the family in those very first years. It continues through the teen years. In the family you can provide the opportunity for your children to question, discuss, or think through your values. By encouraging this to happen, you have a greater chance for "your values" to become "their values."

For a belief or an idea to become a value:

- it must be chosen freely,
- chosen from alternatives after thinking about it,
- and then acted upon or defended publicly.

DISCUSSING VALUES IS IMPORTANT

When you allow yourself to be more open about sex and sexuality, you become a positive role model for your child. You help him develop a "sense of power." You give him an opportunity to connect to you. You help him develop an unusual advantage, being one of the few who can talk to his parents about sex and sexuality. Remember, these characteristics help develop high self-esteem.

Letting your child know your values is important. You may believe that it is wrong to bring an unwanted child into the world. You may believe that no one has a right to take sexual advantage of another. Tell your child. As a parent, you have a right to express those opinions. Even if you live the values you teach, your child may think about and possibly try other values before he decides what his own values will be. Be patient. Keep listening to and talking with your child. Most children grow up to be like their parents.

VALUES TO PASS ON TO YOUR CHILDREN

Think about your own values and feelings about sexuality. Decide which values you want to pass on to your children. Write some of the them here.

____

____

DEVELOP HEALTHY ATTITUDES

People have to receive love before they can give love. When an infant's needs are met with warmth and tenderness, she gets her first experience in love. Feeding, bathing, rocking, and cuddling an infant with love make the difference between whether or not she likes physical contact. As children move into middle childhood, they still need healthy touches and hugs. They also need to grow up knowing that affection can be expressed by emotional intimacy as well as by sexual intimacy. Children who have not experienced warmth and love are likely to be afraid of getting close to others emotionally. These are often the children who confuse physical closeness with emotional closeness. That attitude, unfortunately, is often responsible for early sexual intercourse. Often adolescents are only looking for love and acceptance. They have not learned there are other ways of showing affection. Many teens who have sexual intercourse with several different people are simply searching for love and approval.

We can see that attitudes about sexuality really do begin to form when a child is born. Children notice the relationship between their parents and form their own ideas about what a marriage is all about. As they grow, they begin to see differences in relationships. They are aware of the respect or lack of respect people have for each other. What they see strongly affects the way they feel about themselves as sexual beings. It also affects the way the child relates to other people.

SEX ROLES

It is very important that a child be comfortable with his or her sex. When a child senses that a parent wishes he were a girl, or she were a boy, the child begins to doubt his/her importance. He is not free to develop on his own if he feels he is not accepted for himself. It is extremely important that a child be valued just because he exists.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX?

Children who can talk about sexuality with their parents do not have sexual activity as early as children who cannot. This does not mean that a parent should feel she must give all the facts to a seven-year-old. Tell your children just a little more than what you think they will understand. Most children ask questions about what they are seeing and hearing in their world. These questions are good lead-ins to giving information about bodies, relationships, feelings, sexual intercourse, and infectious diseases.

There are certain things you would tell a twelve-year-old that you would not tell a seven-year-old. Every child in your family is at a different interest level. Boys and girls at the same age are not the same emotionally, physically, or socially. You, as a parent, know your children better than anyone else.

The Dormant Age, five to nine years, is a joyful, happy period of life. Questions that might be asked during this period include:

"Why do fish lay eggs?"
"Where do puppies grow before they're born?"
"Why does my teenage sister (or you and daddy) lock the bedroom door?"
"Why am I a boy (girl)?"

Have your children asked you similar questions? What have they asked you?

If your child has not asked why Aunt Susie was fat before Cousin Joe was born and how he got out of her "tummy" by this time, you need to bring up the subject. Television and relatives are good springboards to conversation. Also, use books that you read, either together or separately, and discuss. A suggested list is at the end of the leaflet.

The Awakened Age, ten to twelve years, is the time in children's lives when they become aware of themselves and others. Children at this age have a heightened curiosity about their bodies. They wonder about physical changes that are occurring within them. Common questions include:

> "How does a baby breathe in a mother's stomach?"
> "How can I get rid of pimples?"
> "Does a woman have to get married to have babies?"

Answers should be given with absolute, direct honesty. The more complete and honest you are, the more respect and love you will get in return. Children will come closer to following your guidelines of morality. It is easier to be open and honest about difficult topics when you have been this way with everything.

You will be surprised with the results when you practice being open and honest with your child. It may not be easy, but the results will be worth the uneasy feelings you may experience.

SEX EDUCATION AWAY FROM HOME

Your child will get some sex education other than what you give her. The education children receive from friends, from television, and movies may not be accurate. If you have created a comfortable climate at home, your child will discuss what she learns from other sources. Then you can make corrections in what she has learned elsewhere. Public schools and churches offer sex education classes that usually have accurate information. These classes can broaden the knowledge you have given your child.

SUMMARY

In this leaflet you have learned that sexuality should be discussed in the family as matter of factly as everything else. If parents act uncomfortable with the subject, the children may not ask them the important questions for which they need answers. Instead, children may seek information from unreliable sources.

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet will be about different lifestyles and the problems and satisfactions unique to each.

ANSWERS TO BINGO

X vagina	X sperm	fallopian tubes	X pregnant
ovary	X penis	womb	sexuality
X sexual intercourse	uterus	X fetus	umbilical cord
chromosome	labor	sex	X ovum

OTHER DEFINITIONS

Fallopian tubes - A pair of tubes through which the egg travels from the ovary to the uterus.

Womb - The place in the body where the unborn child grows. A Biblical term.

Uterus - Same as womb.

Chromosome - A small rod-shaped body found in the nucleus of all body cells that contains the genes or heredity factors.

Labor -The work of giving birth.

Sex - Male or female

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SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Ages Five-Six

Did the Sun Shine Before You Were Born? Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press

Where Did I Come From? Peter Mayle. Lyle Stuart Enterprises

A Better Safe Than Sorry Book. Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press

Wonderful Story of How You Were Born. Sidnoie Gruenberg

Ages Seven-Ten

Girls Are Girls and Boys Are Boys, So What's The Difference? Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press, 7174 Mott Road, Fayetteville, NY 13066

What's Happening to Me? Peter Mayle.

Ages Eleven-Twelve

The Wonderful Story of How Babies Are Born. S. M. Gruenberg

Period. Joann Gardner-Loulan, Bonnie Lopez, Marcia Quackenbush, Bolcano Press

Lynda Madras' Growing Up Guide For Girls. Lynda Madras, Newmarket Press, 18 East 48th, NY 10017, 1986

What's Happening To My Body, A Growing Up Guide For Mothers And Daughters. Lynda Madras, Newmarket Press

Growing And Changing, A Handbook For Preteens. Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman, MD. The Putman Publishing Group

Check your local library for these or other books. Remember to request inter-library loan if you do not find the one you want. Local book stores will often order specific book titles at your request.

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 506 Parenting Renewal

LIFESTYLES: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

LEAFLET 8 IN A SERIES OF 9

As a result of studying this leaflet you will be able to:
- recognize the different types of lifestyles,
- list advantages and disadvantages of each lifestyle,
- understand the effects lifestyles have on parenting skills, and
- provide directions for children who must be at home alone.

FAMILY STYLES

When you think of a family, what comes to mind?
A mother, a father with kids all around.
You think of a home that's happy and warm
In a house that will keep the kids safe from harm.

But wait there are others that we cannot see,
In some of the families, kids aren't at Mom's knee.
Mom is out working to help pay the bills.
She works her eight hours, then helps cure their ills.

Some of these kids in the afternoon come
To a house that is empty, no one is at home.
These latch-key children must grow up fast.
They can't be as free as the kids in the past.

In some other families, big differences flower.
These are the children marked "his," "hers," and "ours."
There're two sets of kids from a previous spouse,
Then some of their own to fill up the house.

In some of the families, there is but one -
That single parent to finish the job just begun.
This could be by death or divorce from a spouse
Or an unwed mother alone in the house.

Perhaps there is one, not thought of too much,
Who gave up his kids in divorce action or such.
He visits his kids when the law says he can,
But can he be there when his son needs a man?

So you see many facets of family life.
It could be a husband, three kids, and a wife.
It could be one parent or a mix from above
But whatever the family there must be love.

Gloria Quick
Marlboro County

PS 018620

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If family members think they have a family, they have one. On the other hand, if they think they have a "broken home," they probably do have one. When children believe that they have an intact home where they belong and are wanted, they feel safe. They generally believe the home is intact because the parent or parents believe so. A sense of their parent's commitment to the parental role is clear.

With the many types of family units in today's society, we must realize the advantages and disadvantages of each. This leaflet is designed to help you look at the different lifestyles and their effects on parenting. It will also give you ideas for your child who may have to be at home alone.

DIFFERENT LIFESTYLES

Nuclear Family - In this type of family, the couple forms the first unit. It has the longest history and most power. When children arrive, the couple becomes part of a parental unit.

The couple learns to parent together. Gradually they learn each other's values and ideas about child-rearing. Through compromise, negotiation, and sometimes dividing responsibility and control, they can find ways of handling differences.

In most nuclear families, the parents are the primary decision makers. Children become involved as parents teach them responsible behavior.

Single-Parent Family - This type of family can be the result of: divorce, desertion, separation, death, serious illness, single-parent adoption, unwed parenthood, employment, or family crisis that requires the prolonged absence of one parent.

The average time between divorce and remarriage is three years. This allows time for the parent and child to become closer. After death or divorce, a family has to re-group. Sometimes it has lost a member who had considerable responsibility and control. The missing parent's share of duties must still be completed. Income may be lowered; living space may change. Discipline, maintaining the household, and caring for each other take a new approach. Parent and child may become more dependent on each other. The family may share more experiences, both emotionally and recreationally, than before the change. Children who lose a parent through death or divorce often learn to handle grief earlier than other children.

Each situation is different, but all single-parent families have some experiences in common. In all one-parent families, adults and children must exert extra effort to:

. accept family status,
. strengthen parent-child relationships, and
. learn management skills.

When a single-parent family is the result of a divorce, the adult who does not keep the children usually continues to interact with the family in some ways. Couples divorce each other, but not their children. Even as the relationship ends, the parental unit does not. Usually over a period of one to five years, former spouses become more distant and less bound together. This is, of course, the opposite of what occurs in marriage. Because of this distancing, the couple becomes more separate in their division of parenting. They no longer care for the children within the same home or at the same time.

Cooperation is needed to ensure that each will have the freedom to parent and otherwise live in his or her own style. Parents communicate about their children—but usually do not share as many feelings and anecdotes about them. Special events such as holidays, birthdays, or weddings are often celebrated separately.

Shared values and beliefs are important. They help build a sense of trust in each other as parents. However, mutual beliefs and values are frequently not shared by divorced parents. Couples must find a way of dealing with each other's parenting style.

If the adult without the children has enough money to participate in hobbies or activities, he may enjoy freedom from the children. He may parent only on weekends, for example, and have the rest of his evenings free.

Blended Families - The traditional step-family is formed when a divorced or widowed parent with children marries a person with or without children. One of every eight children under age eighteen in the United States is living in a blended or step-family.

Living in a blended family is different from and more complicated than living in a nuclear family. Blended families must function in a different manner for many reasons.

Blended families are similar to each other and different from nuclear families in some ways that are listed below.

1. Blended families have more than two parents and many other relationships.
2. Parent-child relationships and those among children may be stronger and longer than the bond of the new blended family.
3. Family problems are more often related to the present.
4. Children are more likely to live in two households.
5. More family members have different life histories.
6. There is less protection against sexual taboos.
7. Blended family members initially mourn their losses.
8. Blended family members sometimes are burdened with guilt feelings.
9. There is an unrealistic expectation of instant love among family members.
10. Children and adults have divided loyalties for each other.
11. Role assumptions and name assignments are not clear.
12. There is less legal security in the blended family.

In general, blended families function much like other families.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Each type of family unit has advantages and disadvantages. Some are listed. Can you think of others? Write your answers in the blanks below.

	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Nuclear Family	Joint decisions	Have to negotiate
	Powerful unit	
	____________	____________
	____________	____________
Single Parent	Makes own decisions	Income may be lowered
	Independent	More responsibilities
	____________	____________
	____________	____________
Adult Without the Children	Freedom to parent in own style	Lack of memory building
	Free time from children	No chance to see daily growth in children
	____________	____________
	____________	____________
Blended Family	More than two parents	Often suffer guilt feelings
	____________	Children sometimes live in two households
	____________	
	____________	____________
	____________	____________

HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH FAMILY

You are not the only one feeling lonely and deserted after a spouse's death, a divorce, or desertion. In fact, your child needs you now more than at any other time in his life. He has lost a parent. He has concerns and fears. He needs to know that you are aware of him and his concerns.

At times it is not easy to be honest with children—but honesty is the best policy. You need not go into the details. Truth is sometimes hard to cover up. Whatever the situation about the absent parent, children must have the truth without prejudice or hypocrisy. However, be careful. Remember, criticism will not help. The child needs all the security he can get. Criticizing the absent parent will only make life more complicated.

Truth with simplicity will help the child put things together more accurately in his own mind.

If the child shows a need for the missing parent figure, enlist the aid of others. Children can be provided with a substitute mother or father. Friends, agencies, and individuals are ready to respond and give time as substitute parents for children in need.

Here are some suggestions to help children successfully handle difficult incidents:

Sometimes a teacher or leader will insist that the child make gifts or invitations for both parents. If this happens to your child, mail one to the absent parent or give it to a grandparent or another adult who is special to the child. Talk with the leader/teacher privately about being more sensitive to family differences in the classroom or group.

Warn children to expect sympathy or embarrassment from others and help them be prepared to respond in a sincere, simple, and positive way.

Teach your child to say matter of factly "My parents are divorced," or "My father died," or "My mom and I are my family."

Be prepared for the loneliness that may accompany birthdays, holidays, and vacations. Make plans to do something that eases that loneliness.

Try to keep some stability in traditions, friends, and surroundings to strengthen your family life. Create new traditions and find new ways to celebrate the uniqueness of your family.

When there is a function for dads and kids only or for moms and kids only, find a friend or relative willing to play the role of the absent parent.

Make it clear that yours is not a "broken" home. It works quite well and does not need "fixing"—all families need support and understanding.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE

Go to the library and look for books on celebrations around the world. Talk with other families about how they celebrate. Make a list of ways your family can celebrate on the lines below.

____

____

STRENGTHS OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Sound parent-child relationships have several areas of strength. What are your family's strengths? Check the ones that apply. Circle the qualities you want to develop in your family.

Family Spirit
_____leadership
_____learning
_____love
_____loyalty

Communication
_____laugh together
_____listen as much as talk
_____communicate enough
_____avoid distractions or interruptions

Responsibilities
_____clearly defined
_____evenly shared
_____willingly accepted
_____

Disagreement
_____identify the problem
_____attack the issue not each other
_____stick to the point
_____do efficiently
_____implement solutions

HELPING THE CHILD WHO HAS TO BE HOME ALONE

Increasing numbers of working and single parents mean many children spend several hours a day at home without adult supervision. Some parents chose this arrangement because they feel the child is old enough to stay alone. Others may have no alternative.

While children can learn responsibility, resourcefulness, and independence at an early age, they may often feel afraid. Parents must prepare their child to stay at home without fear or danger.

Studies show that children who go home rather than "hang out" after school are less likely to get into trouble. They spend their time doing homework, watching television, or taking care of younger brother or sister. Children who "hang out" are more susceptible to peer pressure and getting into trouble than unsupervised children who go home alone or to a friend's home.

If you and your child feel comfortable with and there are no alternatives to her spending time alone at home, consider the following suggestions:

1. Make your home as burglar proof as possible. Put bolts on all house windows. Install lighting around the exterior of the home. Place a system of timers in the house programmed to turn on lights at variable periods.

2. Tell your child not to go into the house after school if the door is ajar, a window broken, or anything else looks unusual. Give instructions to go to a neighbor's house or a store to call and wait for you. Emphasize that the house should not be entered until an adult arrives.

3. Teach your child what to do in case of an emergency. Teach her how and when to call the police, fire department, and local ambulance service. Being prepared for emergencies helps to reduce your child's fears. Role playing may be a helpful activity to be sure that the child does know how to act.

4. Tell your child which of the adults living near your home can be turned to in time of need. If you are new to the neighborhood, canvass the area for responsible neighbors. Introduce your child to them. Make certain there is always someone available while you are away.

5. The telephone is important. Many parents ask that their children telephone as soon as they arrive home. It is a good idea for parents to telephone their children once or twice while the children are at home alone. If telephone calls are restricted at your place of work, arrange for calls to go to an appointed person in your neighborhood.

6. Plan activities that will keep your child occupied to help reduce fear of staying alone. Chores and projects are excellent ways to do this.

7. Provide a pet. Children especially like dogs and cats.

8. Prepare a safety kit. It should contain an identification card, a list of important telephone numbers, the correct change for several phone calls, and perhaps enough money for bus or cab fare. One parent taped such a kit to the inside of her child's lunch bag. The kit was never used, but the child felt better just knowing it was there.

9. Sit down with your child and go over specific house rules. Discuss what you expect the child to do when a stranger comes to the door or when someone calls asking for her parents. Role playing is a good way to teach these skills.

10. Set up a routine with your child to help the child feel secure and able to be responsible. Decide on a time for play and a time for homework and/or household chores. Make sure the child has a checklist of chores that are supposed to be done.

11. Most children are hungry when they get home from school. Let your child know what and how much can be eaten. Leave a note or plan a specific snack place in the refrigerator. Set up a routine of eating a snack and cleaning dirty dishes.

12. Be punctual. Children seem to be able to cope fairly well until the time a parent is expected to arrive. Every minute after that can seem like an eternity. Tell your child exactly when you can be expected home and try to be there.

One final word. Be flexible and try new safety measures. Do not be afraid to change your child-care arrangements. Continuously check all aspects of the situation to be sure that your child is receiving the best possible care you can provide. You must feel that what your child is doing while you are not at home promotes her positive growth and development.

What will you do to make your child safer while she is home alone?

____

____

SUMMARY

We have discussed lifestyles in this leaflet. Which new idea/s presented will you adopt?

WHAT NEXT?

The next leaflet will be about help that is available for you as a parent. We will talk about ways to get help when you need it.

ADDITIONAL HELP AND REFERENCES

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February 1989 For Parents of Children Five to Twelve Years of Age FL 507 Parenting Renewal

SUPPORTS: SEEKING HELP

LEAFLET 9 IN A SERIES OF 9

As the result of studying this leaflet you will:

- remember that everyone has problems,
- review problem-solving techniques,
- realize that it is okay to ask for help with parenting concerns,
- know where to go for help with problems related to parenting, and
- understand the importance of extended families and networks of friends as supports.

Through the years people have depended on each other in times of need. Even though Americans have prided themselves in being self-sufficient, families and friends have reached out to each other in hard times. Families meet crises more successfully and recover from them more quickly when relatives, friends, and neighbors are available to support them. When families and friends can go into each other's kitchens freely, stress is reduced. One study of young mothers (Colletta, 1981) found that those with high levels of support were more affectionate, closer, and more positive with their children. Those with low levels of support were more hostile, indifferent, and rejecting of their children. Other research shows that informal support systems just reduced the parental stress and did not really have an effect on parenting behaviors. Mothers who have a good opinion of their partners felt less depressed and less stressed about their parenting situation according to another study (Myers-Walls, 1983).

Today we have the advantages of modern living, new experiences, greater self-reliance, and more independence from spouses, in-laws, and curious neighbors. Do these advantages outweigh the loss of comfort and support from people who really care? In the place of close family and friends, agencies have become available to help those in need. The children in America are the future of our country. Do you as a parent have the right to ask agencies for help?

Please read the United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child that follows.

The United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child

The right to affection, love, and understanding.
The right to adequate nutrition and medical care.
The right to free education.
The right to full opportunity for play and recreation.
The right to a name and nationality.
The right to special care, if handicapped.
The right to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
The right to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
The right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
The right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

What do you think of these rights?

If families and friends can not give children all of these, should government help? Most people think it should. The future of our country depends on our children. We must take care of all of them.

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SOLVING PROBLEMS

What are problems that parents like yourself might have under the following headings?

Personal

____

____

Social

____

____

Financial

____

____

Medical

____

____

Legal

____

____

Educational

____

____

In the family situation, solving a problem must be approached in a calm, nonemotional, nonthreatening environment. Those involved in the problem need to have input and be respected for their contributions. Following these steps will lead to satisfactory solutions to problems.

1. Figure out just what the problem is. This means look for the problem, not the results of the problem.

2. Brainstorm ways that the problem might be solved. Encourage all family members to brainstorm possible solutions. Build on ideas of others. Brainstorming is a way to identify and list all the solutions you and your family can think of. Some ideas on your list may be "way out," but that is okay. At this point the idea is to see how many solutions can be generated. This step is not the place to judge the worth of any solution. That comes later.

3. Now, explore the solutions you have listed carefully. What resources are needed? What may happen if you choose this solution or that solution? Do you need to use parts of two ideas to get everyone's agreement?

4. Based on the judgement of those involved, choose a solution that all can support. Remember that no matter how carefully you list solutions and seek additional information about a problem, you will never know everything about the solutions. At some point in time, the family has to make the best decision based on what is known at that time. If you wait until you have all the facts, you will never get the problem solved.

BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

Please take one of the problems you listed and brainstorm ways to solve it. Write down 10 ways in the space provided.

Problem: ____

Ways to solve it:

________________ ________________

________________ ________________

________________ ________________

________________ ________________

________________ ________________

Put a circle around the solution that would probably work best.

The best thing to do with any problem is to go through these steps. One way to come up with many alternatives is to ask more people to help you think of solutions. I hope you will remember to use the process on your next problem. And, when you get that problem solved, you will have another one. Life is full of problems. What is the opposite of having problems? You are right. Death is the only way to be without problems, and most of us choose to keep the problems.

Some people and families start through the problem-solving process as soon as a problem occurs. Other individuals and families feel sorry for themselves and do not try to solve the problem. We do not know what makes the difference, but we do know that children learn attitudes about solving life's problems from their parents. Also, the family seems to be the only place a child can learn the problem-solving process we just covered.

Family meetings are good places to show your children how the process works. Even a five-year-old can begin to help with brainstorming. She may have some solutions that will not work, but her ideas may cause someone to think of a workable idea. One word of caution—do not laugh at anyone's suggestions. If you do, you may stop that person from making any more comments.

IDEAS

Raising children is a tough job. No one has to do it alone.

Asking for help is not a sign of failure. It is a sign of effective parenting.

SUPPORT IS THERE FOR THE TAKING. WHO IS ON YOUR LIST?

You may need to arrange a conference with your child's teacher or the guidance counselor if there is a school-related problem. If you need financial support, food, information, or housing, try area churches, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health, or the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service.

The Children and Adult Resource Express, CARE, is a database containing information to help families with children. Your county Extension agent can help you locate services and service providers.

ASSERTIVENESS

Today's society of institutions, bureaucracies, and authoritarian relationships may cause us to feel powerless and overwhelmed. The stress of the daily reminders of the impersonal nature of society—such as waiting in one line only to be told you have to wait in another—can leave you feeling confused and frustrated. One way to respond to these demands is by verbal aggressiveness or attacking people. Another way is to react submissively— give up your own interests and allow other people to run over you without even a protest. The third way is to behave assertively—a way where you express and achieve your own wants and needs without violating the wants and needs of others.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AGGRESSIVE, SUBMISSIVE, OR ASSERTIVE?

People act aggressively when they:

- intentionally attack, take advantage of, humiliate, hurt, or put down other people.
- behave as if others are not as important as they are.

People act submissively when they:

- allow or encourage others to take advantage of them.
- act as if other people are always more important by putting themselves down.

People act assertively when they:

- express themselves openly and honestly to communicate their wants and feelings without putting others down or discounting the wants or feelings of others.
- behave as if they believe that all people, including themselves, are equally important.

Let's take a look at some examples of aggressive, submissive, and assertive behaviors. How would you want someone to respond to you?

1. A neighbor comes uninvited to your door and wants to have coffee and chat. You are going out later and have planned to help your child with his homework first.

   (Aggressive) You scowl and say, "You've got to be kidding. Can't you see I have a million things to do?"

   (Submissive) You are afraid to offend the neighbor, so you say, "Sure, come on in." You end up late for your other appointment and do not help your child.

   (Assertive) You say, "Gee, I'd really like to visit with you, but I am busy right now. Can we plan a time to get together later?"

2. You find that your child's teacher has accused him of something unjustly.

   (Aggressive) In front of others, loudly demand an explanation.

   (Submissive) Worry, and do nothing.

   (Assertive) Privately, quietly, and firmly, ask the teacher for an explanation.

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

By now probably you can think of times when you have acted aggressively, submissively, or assertively.

There may have been times when you:
. wanted to talk to your child's teacher about your child,
. wanted to get rid of a door-to-door salesperson,
. wanted to turn down someone's request to borrow something,
. wanted to ask someone for something,
. wanted to ask someone for a meeting or a date, or
. wanted to tell someone that their smoking or loud noise was disturbing you.

These are just a few examples. Think of some similar situations in which you have been. Decide whether your own behavior was aggressive, submissive, or assertive. Looking back, if you behaved aggressively or submissively, how could you have handled the situation more effectively?

The Situation	How Did I React?	How Did I Feel?

You have to practice being assertive to see that it really can work. By behaving assertively, you are more likely to get what you want and feel good about it. That can go a long way toward reducing some of the stress in your life.

SUMMARY

All parents probably need help at one time or another. Friends, families, agencies, religious institutions, and self-made support groups are available. Often you need to ask. Of course, we always want to try the help that is at the end of our arms first. Americans take pride in being self-sufficient. We can organize support groups and make friends before a crisis comes. One way to do this is by helping others when they are in need.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND RESOURCES

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OVERVIEW

LESSON 1 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

To build a comfortable classroom environment by
- discovering the needs of the parents,
- informing the parents about the lessons and helping parents know what to expect from the series, and
- building enthusiasm for the classes.

Parents will:
- realize that they are their children's most important teachers,
- determine quality of parenting information,
- realize that they are the experts on their own children, and
- choose the attributes they want their children to have.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 1 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

I am____________, and I work with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. I appreciate your presence at the first session of Parenting Renewal. Your being here shows that you care enough about your child or children to spend time improving your parenting skills.

Most of us do the best job of parenting that we can, given what we know. However, let us all agree that there are no perfect parents and that we all make mistakes. These parenting classes will help us renew and update our parenting skills. That is why this course is named PARENTING RENEWAL.

Even the experts have more to learn about parenting. None of us will know all of the answers, but all of us know some of the answers. In these sessions we will put together what all of us know and come out in the end with better parenting skills. Researchers know more today than in the past about which parenting techniques work best with children. I will share what I have learned through study and by being with children. I hope you will do the same.

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PREVIEW - WHERE WE ARE?

(Give pretest here.)

ACTIVITY I

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

We need to know each other better before we can work comfortably together. Let me tell you one funny incident that happened to one of my children and me or my friend and her child. *(Insert a funny personal story here.)* Now will each of you give your name, the number and ages of your children, and share a funny incident if you would like? *(If you have a large crowd you may not have time for the funny incident. Or, you may have to break the large group into smaller groups for this activity.)*

Let us make sure we know everyone's name. *(Have everyone sit in a circle. Ask the first person to give her* name, the second person to give her name and the name of the first person. Then ask the third person to give her name and the name of the first person and the second person. State that this is a fun activity. Give praise to all who try. Assure parents it is okay to say "I pass." Avoid making participants feel bad; they might not come back for the next session. After you have called on everyone, ask if anyone would like to try again.)* Thank you for trying so hard to learn everyone's name. Names are important to people, children included.

How did you like that activity? Were you surprised that you could learn __ names in one night? How did you do it? Why did you do it? Do people live up to other people's expectations? *(Make the point that adults and children usually try to live up to the expectations other people have of them.)* What if I had started by saying, "I would like for you to learn everyone's name tonight, but I know that is more than you can do."?

YOU ARE THE EXPERT ON YOUR OWN CHILD

Everybody is quite generous with opinions about how to be a parent. Often you get this information without even asking for it. Each expert claims to have at least some of the answers to child-rearing problems. You cannot follow what every expert advises because some of the information is conflicting. The question is, how do you know to whom you should listen? There is one principle to remember: You are the expert on your own child. The decision on what to do and whose opinion to follow lies within you. You can choose to listen to any advice you wish to. You can decide which advice to put into practice depending upon your values, your child's personality, and your unique situation. In the end you have to use your own judgment. You know your child better than anyone.

JUDGING INFORMATION

Most parents learn about being a good parent from their own childhood experiences and from reading. To which parenting information should you listen? One authority in family life (Myers-Walls, 1983) gives the following guidelines for judging and using information about parenting:

1. Recognize your own needs. For example, just because the information you are reading implies that all children need more responsibility does not mean that yours does. Your child may need what the information recommends if:

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* The pronouns "he, she, him, her, his, hers" are used throughout the lessons interchangeably. Statements are equally applicable to a child or parent of either sex.

- You have talked about the problem before.
- The information makes you feel guilty because of what you expect of yourself as a parent, not because of what someone else expects.
- The family described is like yours.

2. Shop for good-quality information. After you decide that you do need help with a problem, look for information on which you can rely. Consider:
   - The source of the information. Have you received useful information from this source before? If they claim to have all the answers, watch out!
   - The reliability of the statistics. Do they sound reasonable to you? Check you local library for information about sources, for example, W.A. and L.S. Katz's *Magazines for Libraries: For the General Reader*.

3. Use the information in the best way to suit our own life.

4. Involve the family members affected by the change.

5. Write down what you are going to do differently and be as specific as you can.

6. After you have used the new technique for a while, ask yourself if it has improved the situation. If it has not, make another change. The best approach for you and your child is what you feel comfortable with. Also, children respond differently to different techniques. A good technique may not work with some children.

ACTIVITY 2

WHAT MY CHILD DOES WELL AND WHY

In Leaflet 1, write one thing that your child does well. In groups of four, share information. *(Divide group by counting off.)* Tell how you taught your child this new skill. *(Allow time for this to happen. Call group back together and ask if anyone would like to share with the whole group. Make the point that you are pleased that the parents are willing to share with each other.)*

ACTIVITY 3

CAN YOU "GROW" AN IDEAL CHILD?

Look at the list of attributes people value in Leaflet 1. Draw circles around the 10 you would like your child to have when he is twelve years old.
(Allow time for participants to do this part of the activity.)

Adventurous
Assertive
Broad-minded
Capable
Cheerful
Clean
Courageous
Creative
Curious
Efficient
Forgiving
Funny
Generous
Helpful
Honest
Independent
Intelligent
Kind
Loving
Obedient
Persevering
Polite
Responsible
Self-controlled
Sympathetic
Tolerant

Now put these 10 in order of importance. Place number 1 by the most important attribute you would like your child to have. Place a 10 by the one of the 10 that is least important to you. Place a 2 by the second most important one, 3 by the third most important one and so on. There is no particular right order. Just decide what you would like. *(After time has been allowed for this part of the activity, ask parents to share with a partner what they think an ideal child is like.)*

Note: An alternative to listing the attributes in order of importance is to discuss some of the words after listing them on newsprint or chalkboard. Choose a few words that will be easy for your group to understand.

Most of us have an idea of what we think an ideal person is like.

Not everyone agrees on the attributes an ideal person has.

Can parents raise an ideal child?

What are other influences on the child?

ACTIVITY 4

HOW DO "IDEAL CHILD" VALUES DETERMINE PARENTING BEHAVIOR?

Read the examples of how values determine parenting styles in Leaflet 1.

1. Mrs. Johnson values physical fitness and good health. She enrolls her children in gymnastics and takes them to the doctor regularly for checkups. She reads medical and health books, sees that the children are getting the right food, and talks about the importance of good health.
2. Mr. Jones wants his children to appreciate the outdoors and he wants them to be independent. He takes his six-year-old camping and longs for the day when she can join scouts and a 4-H club with camping programs. He remembers his childhood camping experiences favorably. He enjoys teaching his daughter to prepare simple foods now and to do other simple things for herself.
3. Mrs. Roseman values education above all else. She feels that an educated person can get ahead in the world. She watches the news and discusses it with her children at meals. She requires that each older child study or read for an hour each week night. She spends time talking with each child about his personal interests. She knows that a child's judgmental skills begin to be formed early.

How do the values you have for your child influence what you do as a parent? In Leaflet 1 there is a place to write your answer. Please do so now. *(After a few minutes, ask if anyone is willing to share what they have written.)*

OVERVIEW OF LESSONS

In the introduction, I suggested that research does show some ways that parents of school-age children can help children to grow up to be competent adults. Three years ago in South Carolina, all types of people came to meetings conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service to help identify problems in South Carolina. Some of the problems identified most often were teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, the high number of people in prison, school dropouts, the number of people on welfare, child abuse, and the disunity of families. A special team of county agents and state Extension workers studied parenting programs that had been successful in solving these problems in other states. This team discovered that a person's parents have more to do with how a person turns out than does any other person.

The team members put together the evaluation results of other programs and the research on how people are affected by their parents. They discovered that the middle childhood years are very important to the development of a child. The Parenting Renewal Program for parents of children five through twelve is the result. The session topics are:

1. Overview of the Program
2. Readiness: Guiding Development
3. Empowerment: Achieving Self-Discipline in Children
4. Nurturance: Building Healthy Self-Esteem in Children
5. Education: Helping Children Succeed in School
6. Wellness: Keeping Children Healthy and Safe
7. Awareness: Developing Values
8. Lifestyles: Adapting to Changes
9. Supports: Seeking Help

The first letters of the titles of Lessons 2 through 8 spell "RENEWAL." You are warmly invited to attend the rest of the sessions to discover more about parenting and to share what you already know with other parents.

ACTIVITY 5

HOMEWORK

Find an article or book on parenting and decide if it is factual information. Bring it to the next class and be prepared to share your findings.

SUMMARY

In each session you may see a film, participate in group discussions, or hear short lectures. There will be some simple assignments. In the nine sessions, you will learn how to:

- Aid your child's physical development
- Help your child grow into a competent adult
- Communicate with your child
- Use firm instead of harsh discipline
- Help your child develop a healthy self-esteem
- Contribute to your child's success in school
- Help your child understand different lifestyles
- Help your child develop values
- Keep your child healthy and safe
- Cope with your child's emotions
- Ask for help when you need it

You are your child's most important teacher. What you do and believe influences your child's future. Together we can learn and share effective parenting techniques. As a result, we can grow and develop new skills.

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be about the development of your child. You will learn about normal growth.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND REFERENCES

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READINESS: GUIDING NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

LESSON 2 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will:

- understand normal development of middle childhood,
- determine behavior appropriate to certain ages, and
- gain skills in applying child development facts to nurturing a child in the middle childhood years.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 2 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils
Shells, bananas, or flowers

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Welcome to the second Parenting Renewal class. Your presence here shows that you care about your child. Children in the middle childhood years need as much love and nurturing as do children of younger ages. The purposes of this lesson are:

- to help you understand normal development of middle childhood,
- to help you gain insights into certain facts about this age, and
- to help you gain new skills in applying these facts.

You already know much about children this age. In fact, you are the expert on your own child. You have certainly learned many things about parenting already. In the first activity you will be invited to share some things you have learned about parenting.

ACTIVITY 1

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT PARENTING

To work as an effective group, we must know each other better. At each class meeting we will begin by sharing. The first activity today will allow us to share what we already know about parenting. Please remember the number I give you. *(Count the number of people. Divide the number. For example, if you have 20 people and divide that number in half, you would get 10. Number the people to 10 and then start over with one. This way you can get the ones together, the twos together, and so on, and everyone will have a partner. If there is an odd number, you can be a partner to someone.)* Please sit with the person who has the same number that you have. *(After the partners settle down, continue.)* Take turns and share three things with your partner: your name, names and ages of your children, and a happy memory of your own childhood. *(Allow a few minutes for this sharing time.)* You seemed to enjoy that. I am glad you joined in the fun. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

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ACTIVITY 2

SHARING TIME

Who found an article or book about parenting? Would you tell us about it? Is the information in it factual? (Review the section "Judging Information" in Lesson 1.)

ACTIVITY 3

UNIQUENESS OF CHILDREN

We will have a quiet activity now. The rule is that no one may speak until I give a signal. Please come up and choose one banana *(you may use shells, flowers, or apples)* and return to your seat. Will you come, ______, and ________, you follow her. *(Call names of two people to start coming up. Wait until everyone has chosen a banana and returned to their seats to begin speaking again.)* Now look carefully at the banana you have chosen. Study it for three minutes. Notice any peculiar marks, coloring, or shapes. Get to know your banana well. *(After allowing time for parents to study their bananas, ask them to come quietly and return their banana to the basket. Then mix up the bananas.)* Please come back and see if you can find the banana you had. *(You may need to encourage the parents to try to do this. Wait until everyone has found the banana he chose the first time and has returned to his seat.)*

These objects are all bananas, but each is different from another. The little differences cause no major problems in the purpose or function of the fruit. The differences of each person or thing in the world is special and help us tell one from the other. The smaller bananas may be sweeter; the less colorful ones may have a better flavor. So it is with the differences in children.

Please help list some ways in which children are different. If you call out the ways, I will write them on the chalkboard. *(Make a list. Some examples are size, intelligence, coordination, dependency, temperament.)* Differences are okay. If all children, or all adults for that matter, were alike it would be a dull world. The challenge is to love children and appreciate their uniqueness.

FIVE UNIVERSAL LAWS ABOUT HUMAN GROWTH

In spite of differences in children, there are some truths about human growth. Let us read and discuss the truths in Leaflet 2.

1. The child wants to grow.
2. Growth has directions.
3. Growth has order.
4. Each child is an individual.
5. Growth is uneven.

MAJOR TASKS OF CHILDREN FROM FIVE TO TWELVE

According to scientist Erik Erikson, the major task of the child from five to twelve years of age is to achieve a sense of industry (opposite of being lazy) rather than one of inferiority. To do this, accomplishments must be made in three major ways: through developing a sense of self, gaining social acceptance, and experiencing achievement. Parents who know what to expect during each stage of development can encourage achievement and not push the child beyond what he can do. Parents can help the child develop a sense of self, gain social skills, and experience achievement. Accomplishing the task at hand makes the child feel good about himself and be able to go on to more difficult tasks.

This does not mean that a child needs to be enrolled in afterschool activities. One child was sent to five extra activities outside school every week. These left little time for play, friendship, reading, or hobbies. Children who grow up using their imaginations to find things to do after school will probably be successful adults, especially if they are given enough love.

CHARACTERISTICS BY AGE

As you read the characteristics of children in Leaflet 2, remember that each child is unique. The information given is for the average child. Your child may be a little ahead or a little behind the average child in some aspects. Very few, if any, children fit this profile exactly. How children grow depends on the guidance provided by their parents and other adults. Characteristics they inherit from their parents make a difference. The experiences children have inside and outside the home also affect how they grow. The characteristics below are to serve only as a guide. You may find them helpful when working with middle-years children. Take a few minutes now and read the characteristics of children the same age as your child. Keep the leaflet and look at it again as your child grows. Right now, though, place a check by the characteristics that you have noticed already happening with your child. *(Pause as parents read and check.)*

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 33 and 52 pounds
____ Are between 39 and 46 inches tall

Physical:
____ Are poised and controlled
____ Can throw different-sized balls
____ May have difficulty catching them
____ Do not take naps
____ Usually cannot roller skate, ride bike, or jump rope
____ May practice the above for hours, however
____ Put off going to bathroom
____ Boys may grab genitals to put off going to the bathroom because they are busy
____ Do not get tired as often
____ Can learn to snap fingers, wink, and whistle

Intellectual:
____ Ask many questions
____ Can tell their right from their left, but not yet in other people
____ Can use over 2,000 words
____ Begin to learn colors, letters, and numbers
____ Can recite a story
____ Very few can actually read

Emotional:
____ Are cooperative and helpful
____ Can be upset by changes in plans
____ May say "I hate you" or "I love you"
____ May release tension by thumb sucking, rhythmic movements, or genital-touching

Social:
____ Have closest ties to parents
____ Love teachers
____ Like one-on-one contacts

____ Need to be first, or the best
____ May tell one another "you are too dumb to be on my team"
____ May bribe each other with promises
____ May not keep these promises
____ Sometimes feel that no one likes them
____ Are able to choose activities and friends
____ Like to play house and practice different roles

SIX-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 35 and 56 pounds
____ Are between 42 and 49 inches tall

Physical:
____ Like to play games with rules, but find this hard to do
____ Like to rough-house, but often overdo it
____ Seem to always be hungry
____ May develop a sweet tooth, so diet needs to be watched
____ May wet bed on occasion
____ Gain molars and may begin to lose baby teeth
____ Are clumsy and tend to "fiddle around"

Intellectual:
____ Learn to read words and word combinations
____ Learn to write capital letters before lower case
____ May make letters and numbers backward
____ May have a hard time making choices, even about things you were sure your child knew earlier
____ Think of death as reversible
____ May believe that they have caused a death when someone close to them dies
____ Do not like to lose games, for example, checkers
____ May go back to using baby talk

Emotional:
____ Say what they think and feel
____ Get feelings hurt easily
____ Are self-centered and think you should stop what you are doing to watch them
____ Have many temper tantrums
____ Switch rapidly from crying to laughter or vice versa
____ Release tension by nail-biting, leg swinging, teeth grinding, hair chewing, or wiggling

Social:
____ See themselves as big kids
____ Are loving to smaller children, animals, and babies
____ May have difficulty getting along with brothers and sisters
____ Are bossy
____ Have unsteady friendships
____ May take pleasure in leaving a third child out
____ May be unkind to others
____ Notice when they themselves are slighted
____ Are not modest

SEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 40 and 65 pounds
____ Are between 44 and 51 inches tall

Physical:
____ Are active
____ Are more cautious than six-year-olds in trying new things
____ Are better at jumping rope, bike riding, and skating
____ Repeat an activity over and over again until they have mastered it
____ Drop an activity for a new activity once the first one is mastered
____ Can draw and write better
____ Love chasing each other, climbing trees, and spinning in circles
____ Enjoy quiet time to themselves
____ Enjoy comparing who is fastest, smartest, and best
____ Can build a model from simple plans
____ Like to build things, but often get upset before project is complete
____ Handle dressing completely

Intellectual:
____ Enjoy reading as a pastime
____ Sit and think or daydream
____ Begin to take the viewpoint of others and say what adults want to hear, for example, "That was a good sandwich."
____ Can tell time
____ Divide good and bad people in their minds
____ Like to tell and hear jokes
____ Like to collect

Emotional:
____ Are more polite than six-year-olds
____ Less opinionated and stubborn than when younger
____ Are sensitive about their bodies
____ Will not undress in front of anyone
____ Enjoy being part of the family
____ Like to make gifts for those they care about
____ Are eager to help adults
____ Like adult approval
____ Worry about failure and often will not try something new or hard

Social:
____ May be moody, sad, or angry
____ Are less likely to direct those emotions to others
____ Can learn table manners
____ Are polite to adults
____ Share toys, secrets, and time with friends
____ Get along better with brothers and sisters, but this depends on age
____ Are still self-centered
____ Ask for "real" jobs
____ Listen as well as talk at mealtime

EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 41 and 76 pounds
____ Are between 46 and 53 inches tall

Physical:
____ On the average, girls are six months ahead of boys in physical maturity
____ Often get wild and reckless when left to play as a group
____ Have an increase in speed and ease of performance
____ Complain of stomach cramps or full bladders when under pressure
____ May return to thumb-sucking with fatigue or stress

Intellectual:
____ Have much curiosity
____ Continue collecting
____ Begin to recognize differences in people
____ Like to hear stories about children in other times and places
____ Begin to realize that parents and teachers are not perfect
____ Like cooking
____ Can follow rules of games
____ Like to make up rules for games
____ Like board games and video games

Emotional:
____ Are more self-confident than seven-year-olds
____ Care about how their family feels about them
____ Are very critical of themselves
____ Will go ahead and try more new things than a year ago
____ Will sulk
____ Worry about acceptance in different peer groups
____ Like to argue

Social:
____ Love to gossip
____ Are not intentionally vicious
____ Have high expectations of parents
____ Enjoy pleasing other adults
____ Feel friendships with peers are important
____ Like to role play adult feelings about religion, ethnic groups, and money

NINE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 49 and 89 pounds
____ Are between 48 and 56 inches tall

Physical:
____ Girls may start puberty spurt of growth
____ Can show skill in team sports
____ Require less sleep than younger children or teens
____ May neglect personal cleanliness
____ Need to be reminded to comb hair, brush teeth, and change underwear
____ Enjoy biking, skating, and swimming

Intellectual:
____ Are more mature and show better judgement in their actions than younger children
____ Are attracted by materials and information
____ Can solve problems
____ Show increased awareness of sex differences
____ Can be self-directed about taking responsibility for a task
____ Have a broad sense of humor and know a variety of jokes
____ Demand to know all the rules to a game

Emotional:
____ Exhibit a wide range of feelings that change quickly
____ Have a strong need to please
____ Are nervous about being evaluated
____ Still get upset easily
____ Appear self-confident
____ May fiddle around or pick at their nails when nervous
____ Show genuine empathy for others
____ Accept failures and mistakes more realistically

Social:
____ Tend to play in smaller groups than younger children
____ Do not usually boast, brag, or attack other children as they did earlier
____ Are fair
____ Make fewer demands on parents and other adults than when younger
____ Love to be chosen by teachers and peers
____ Can be trusted to do what they say they will do
____ Love to talk with friends
____ Share secrets, surprises, and information
____ Become interested in clothes

TEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 54 and 105 pounds
____ Are between 50 and 59 inches tall

Physical:
____ Have become competent at sports, games, and other activities
____ Girls may start breast development
____ May wet bed
____ Girls may have first menstruation

Intellectual:
____ Have longer attention spans than earlier
____ Are able to judge themselves accurately
____ Appear to be "experts" on things they know little about
____ Like to make long lists
____ Begin to understand social injustice and take up causes
____ Love trivia
____ Like organization and schedules
____ Understand the difference between thinking and doing

Emotional:
____ Like and accept themselves
____ Are willing to admit mistakes
____ See peers as important as family
____ May adopt another family as their own, especially if family is different from their own

____ Are generally agreeable
____ May withdraw if things go wrong
____ Enjoy putting things over on adults and then feel guilty
____ Will seldom tell on a friend

Social:
____ Are at peace with their world and with the people in it
____ Enjoy planning and going on outings and trips
____ Are great joiners
____ Are protective of brothers and sisters
____ Resent being told what to do
____ Need constant reminders of daily responsibilities
____ Express friendship by pushing, punching, or wrestling (boys)
____ Tend to have one best friend at a time (girls)
____ Like to tell jokes and ask riddles

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 60 and 119 pounds
____ Are between 52 and 61 inches tall

Physical:
____ Have an increase in energy and appetite
____ Need a complete eye exam because visual impairment begins to show up
____ Experience rapid growth in feet and hands
____ Girls are more likely to experience a growth spurt than boys
____ Girls may have first menstruation
____ Have not outgrown sloppiness

Intellectual:
____ Become more skilled in information processing than ten-year-olds
____ Enjoy new experiences and knowledge about the world around them
____ Are pleased when they do well in school
____ Enjoy receiving praise
____ Are less receptive of criticism
____ May daydream or fantasize about the future
____ May criticize or confront adults to get attention
____ May challenge parents on child rearing or family values
____ May have strong views

Emotional:
____ Have trouble controlling feelings and actions
____ Overextend themselves
____ Form loyal and needed friendships
____ Are martyrs and complain, "Everything I do is wrong."
____ Are highly critical of parents' judgement
____ Often quarrel with parents
____ Worry if they will be accepted or rejected by a group

Social:
____ May be defiant to parents and teachers
____ Try to master increasingly difficult physical skills
____ Desire to become independent
____ Are loud and aggressive in groups
____ Are more polite to strangers than to parents
____ Choose best friends with similar temperaments and common interests
____ Show increased interest in opposite sex
____ May aggravate opposite sex

TWELVE-YEAR-OLDS

Size:
____ Weigh between 65 and 135 pounds
____ Are between 54 and 64 inches tall

Physical:
____ Have lost all baby teeth
____ Have longer noses, flatter abdomens, and waistlines develop
____ Develop pubic and underarm hair (girls)
____ May have first menstruation (girls)
____ Begin testicle enlargement, which continues until about age 18
____ Desires privacy when seeing the doctor

Intellectual:
____ Increase in problem-solving ability
____ Become interested in religion
____ May become moralistic in their attitudes and judgments
____ No longer take everything for granted
____ Mature in their ability to postpone satisfaction until later for the sake of accomplishing a task or desired goal
____ Have trouble organizing and keeping track of school work

Emotional:
____ Get feelings hurt if singled out and criticized
____ Are rarely indifferent about anyone
____ May accuse parents of loving other siblings more than them
____ Still have need for affection from parents
____ Do not like affection from parents in front of peers and other adults
____ Become upset when adults tease them or make fun of them
____ Believe they are no longer children

Social:
____ Relate better to peers and adults than when younger
____ May do loud, silly things in a group
____ Are critical of own appearance
____ May have wild fads in dress
____ Do not yet have cleanliness as a high priority
____ May develop "hero worship" and idolize bold and adventurous adults
____ Are more able to deal with jealousy and rivalry than before
____ Turn to peers for information about sex and birth control

ACTIVITY 4

SHARING TIME

Now find a parent who has a child the same age as your child and discuss the characteristics of your child. Tell what you like best about your child. If you have several children between five and twelve years of age, you will want to change partners in a few minutes.

FACTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT DURING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

There are some facts about development that parents need to know. You can follow in the leaflet if you would like. Please ask questions as we go over the facts.

1. No two children are alike; yet each follows the same general pattern of growth.
2. Most children develop faster in some areas than in others. For example, a child who knows many words may not be able to run as fast as a child who just knows a few words.
3. The best way a parent can help a child develop a strong vocabulary is to use many different words and talk with the child as much as possible.
4. The parent is the child's most important teacher. Parents help children learn judgmental skills, develop interests, and adopt values.
5. Children in the middle years depend on and need caring adults in their lives.
6. Before a new skill can be learned, the child's muscles and coordination must be mature enough to allow such learning.

ACTIVITY 5

THINKING TOGETHER

What would you do and how would you feel if:

Your five-year-old still took a nap?
Your five-year-old could not tell his right hand from his left hand?
Your six-year-old used a larger vocabulary than a neighbor of the same age?
Your eleven-year-old did not show interest in the opposite sex?

What can be concluded from the answers to the above questions?

(Answer - As long as the middle-years child is developing in the right order, it does not really matter if he is a little slow or a little fast in one area. Just become familiar with the order of development in middle years. Do not be upset if the child cannot do things beyond his developmental stage. On the other hand, do not think the child is a genius just because he is a little ahead in some area of development. If you suspect that your child is seriously behind others, contact your school guidance personnel or physician.)

SIGNS OF BEHAVIORAL DELAY

Your child may need special help if she:

- has trouble with small motor skills, like writing;
- constantly complains about health;
- has trouble concentrating;
- skips lines or loses place in reading;
- is too listless and uncaring;
- spends much time studying for tests and still makes low grades on them;
- is more than one half year behind in school;

- has problems getting along with peers;
- throws tantrums;
- has many temper flare-ups;
- is sad most of the time;
- gets upset easily;
- has a negative self-concept; and/or
- bites nails, sucks thumb, or has twitches in the face.

ACTIVITY 6

HOMEWORK

Here are some ways to help your child grow. List others on the space provided in the leaflet.

- Answer your child's questions.
- Acknowledge what your child says to you.
- See that your child gets plenty of rest, exercise, adequate nutrition, and health care.
- Help your child to form judgmental skills by asking her opinion and discussing television shows, news, and books. Ask, "What would you do if...?" or "What did he do wrong?"
- Share your feelings and invite your child to do so.
- Help your child to have interesting experiences.
- Prepare a private place for your child to study.

Choose one or more of the above to focus on during the time before the next lesson. Be prepared to discuss the results.

SUMMARY

Children are individuals with their own special temperaments and traits. Parents can help children have healthy self-concepts by respecting the differences in children. The other lessons in this series also contain ways you can help your child develop.

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be about discipline. We will talk about what it is and its purpose. We will also think about methods of child rearing that work.

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EMPOWERMENT: ACHIEVING SELF-DISCIPLINE

LESSON 3 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will:
- identify discipline styles,
- understand the difference between effective discipline and ineffective discipline,
- relate communication to effective discipline, and
- understand different temperaments of children.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 3 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Do you know what the word empowerment means? It is a complex word. It means to make a person feel that he can improve his life and the lives of other people. As you rear your child, you are making things happen for him. You do this by teaching him how to get along with other people. These other people may be his family members, adults, and other children in school or in your community. You empower him when you teach him to make choices and set goals for himself.

By teaching your child not only to cope with the problems of life but also to contribute to social concerns, you are empowering him to take control of his own life. Whether or not you empower your child is determined by the way you guide (or discipline) him.

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

Select a partner and share the results of the assignment from the last lesson. Tell your partner how you helped your child to grow.

ACTIVITY 2

STYLES OF DISCIPLINE

Please complete the activity in Leaflet 3. *(Allow a few minutes for parents to complete the multiple choice questions, then go over the answers.)*

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Choose the correct definition for the following styles of discipline:

_____ 1. permissive
_____ 2. moderate
_____ 3. strict

a. The parent has a few rules and enforces them consistently, firmly, with kindness, warmth, and love.

b. The child makes all the rules and decisions.

c. The parent expects immediate obedience and gives no explanation for demands.

Answers:

1. B
2. A
3. C

Which style of discipline is more likely to produce an adult who feels empowered to make things right that are wrong? Which style of discipline would produce a responsible, cooperative adult with a good self-concept who is considerate of others? If you guessed the moderate style of discipline, you are right on the target. This middle-of-the-road style of discipline is what we will focus on in this lesson. Once you have completed the activities in this lesson, you will have developed skills that will allow you to be moderate in your discipline practices.

ACTIVITY 3

PARENTING LIKE YOUR PARENTS

Select a partner and tell him one good discipline method your parents used that you are using with your children. Explain how you feel about the way you were disciplined.

ACTIVITY 4

EXAMPLES OF MODERATE DISCIPLINE

Place a check by the moderate style of discipline in Leaflet 3. *(Allow time for this activity. Discuss answers.)*

1. When a third grader brings home a poor report card, her father
a. calls her "stupid."
b. firmly limits his daughter's television viewing.

2. When a father discovers that his ten-year-old has shoplifted a toy from a local store, he
a. spanks her severely to show her that she has done something wrong.
b. accompanies his child to the store where she returns the toy to the store manager.

3. After an eight-year-old viciously hits his five-year-old sister for kicking over a tower he was building in the living room, his mother
a. makes him apologize to his sister.

b. listens to his reasons for the outburst, asks him to identify other ways of responding to the problem, and sends him and his sister to their rooms for 15 minutes.

4. When he sees his ten-year-old son writing an obscenity on a neighbor child's driveway, his father

a. decides to ignore the incident since "boys will be boys."

b. immediately calls the neighbor to apologize and has the child remove the word.

Answers:

1. The more effective response is (b) because limiting television is more likely to help the child improve her school performance. The (a) response is destructive because it reduces the child's sense of self-esteem.

2. The more effective response is (b). The child learns to make amends for her misbehaviors. The father does so without embarrassing his child. Spanking in (a) would be ineffective because the child already knows that she has done "something wrong." This response resembles revenge and has the effect of instilling fear in his child as well as teaching her that violence is a preferred response to problems.

3. The more effective response is (b). Mother shows her willingness to listen to her child's point of view and, by encouraging him to identify alternatives to hitting, nurtures her son's problem-solving abilities.

4. The more effective response is (b). The father cannot ignore this offense. He should be firm without being cruel. An apology by the father is appropriate. Having the child clean the driveway is a lesson in justice. If the father does nothing as in (a), then he is showing his approval of a serious misbehavior.

KNOW YOUR CHILD

Each child has his own unique personality. Children may fall into one of three different personality types: difficult, easy, or slow to warm up.

A difficult child -

- shrieks rather than whines.
- is upset by new people or places.
- is irregular in eating and sleeping habits.
- has violent temper tantrums.

An easy child -

- is generally cheerful.
- responds agreeably to new people, places, and foods.
- has regular eating and sleeping habits.

A slow-to-warm-up child -

- withdraws from new situations.
- adapts to changes slowly.

There are children who do not fit into any of these types. They are neither difficult, easy, or slow-to-warm-up children. The different ways in which children behave depend on the qualities inherited from their parents. You may have noticed that some children will work at a problem until it is solved, whereas others give up at the smallest hint of trouble. Some children are very active. Others are quiet most of the time.

If we agree that children can be very different, then we must agree that their differences must be considered when we are teaching them how to behave.

Some parents wonder if their child is mature enough for her age. They are sometimes concerned about their child's actions and think that the child is not making progress. The child may seem to have too much energy. She may ask what seems to be too many questions.

This is not bad behavior. The child is learning about her world in the only way she knows how. It is up to her parents and teachers to guide her learning in a manner that will be most useful to her. Parents must see that their child learns all that she can.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

Talking with your child is a very important part of empowering him. In talking with him, you want him to feel comfortable with letting you know what his feelings are and how they affect what he does. Another goal should be to increase your child's self-esteem and cooperation. *(See Lesson 4.)*

These two goals can be accomplished by following the rules listed below when talking with your child.

- Be polite.
- Show appreciation.
- Attack the problem instead of the child.
- Avoid labels that hurt.
- Praise the specific accomplishment of your child.
- Stop talking and just listen.

These rules let your child know that you love him no matter what happens. They help him to feel respected and worthwhile. One scholar pointed out that the "Language of Acceptance" can be both spoken and unspoken.

You can let your child know you accept him by:

1. Not interfering. An example would be not telling your child to color the sky blue unless he asks what color to make it.
2. Listening. Remain silent when your child talks. You may lean forward, nod your head, or put your arm around him.

Inviting your child to talk with you makes him feel that he is a worthwhile person. One way to do this is to use door openers like "Gee!," "Interesting," "I see...," and "Really?" Try getting your child to talk by saying "Tell me more!" or "I want to hear more about this."

Let your child know that you are trying to understand his feelings. Act as a sounding board by sending back what you think the child is saying. We do this by saying, "You mean...," "In other words...," or "You really are..."

Conflicts arise when parents are insensitive to their child's feelings and needs. When we order our children around or make too many unreasonable and unnecessary requests in an authoritarian tone or voice, our children resent it. Instead, we should use the Language of Acceptance and let our children know that we understand their point of view. For example, we speak in a polite manner and say "I'm sorry to interrupt you, but...," or "I realize you may not want to, but it would help me out so much if you would..." So, parents need to learn to respect their children and the situation.

ACTIVITY 5

USING THE LANGUAGE OF ACCEPTANCE

Read the situation in Leaflet 3 and place an X by the responses which would NOT be an example of the Language of Acceptance.

Situation: Daughter comes in ranting and raving, "I hate that Jane. All she ever wants to do is play - and with Mary. It's not fair. Mary is my best friend. I'll fix her. I told Mary that she takes things. Now maybe Mary won't want to play with her anymore."

Responses:

_____ 1. I'm interested in hearing more about Jane and Mary. Let's talk some more.

_____ 2. Sounds like you are so upset with Jane for trying to take Mary away that you feel like getting even.

_____ 3. That's not a nice thing to say about Jane. Go to your room and plan on not playing with anyone for a week.

If you figured that the response 3 did not express the Language of Acceptance, you were right. The Language of Acceptance shows that you want to share what the other is feeling.

The Language of Unacceptance makes your child feel like she is not smart enough to solve her problems. It discourages your child by pointing out how smart you are. "Here let me help you. I don't think you can do that yet." "Wait until you get bigger." "You're not old enough." These phrases discourage your child's interest in trying new things.

You use the Language of Acceptance when you give honest praise. When your child does something worthy of praise, you must let her know what it is. For example, if your seven-year-old daughter has made a clay bowl for you at school, you would not tell her that she is the best potter in the world. Your child would realize that this could not be true and would feel that your comment was not sincere. A better response might be to praise something that you really like about the bowl, like the color or the shape.

A comment that some parents are famous for is "You can do better than that." Your child may give up or think that she will never be able to please you.

ACTIVITY 6

PRAISING YOUR CHILD

As we read the situations in Leaflet 3, circle the more honest and effective praise. *(Allow time for this activity and discuss.)*

1. Mary made "breakfast in bed" for you. The juice, cereal, and coffee were terrific, but the eggs were like rubber.
a. "What a treat! You're the best cook in the house."
b. "What a thoughtful thing to do! You are sure learning to cook."

2. Joan brings home her report card with an A in Art and C's in everything else. Her oldest sister has all A's.
a. "You've done exceptionally well in Art. You must really enjoy it."

b. "Look at that nice report card. You're getting as smart as your sister. But I know you can do even better."

3. Bill cleans up his room. It is not perfect, but quite an improvement.
a. "What a fantastic room cleaner you are."
b. "Thanks for cleaning your room. It looks a lot better."

4. Tom, age nine, brings home a stool he made at Scouts. The paint job is especially neat, even if the pieces are not perfectly straight.
a. "What a nice stool. I especially like the color and the neat paint job."
b. "You're a terrific carpenter!"

Answers:
1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a

ACTIVITY 7

APPRECIATING YOUR CHILD

How can you start using the Language of Acceptance more frequently? The first thing to do is decide what to STOP saying and doing. Then you can decide what to start saying and doing. So, if you have been negative about behavior you do not want, you need to stop doing that and instead show appreciation for the behavior you DO want. Examine the parent-child relationships in Leaflet 3 and see what is wrong. Change the "solution" and "put-down" messages to the Language of Acceptance. *(Allow time for parents to write; then read the discussion together.)*

1. Child: Dad! Dad! Hey! I got two A's!
Dad: How many times do I have to tell you not to slam the door?

The parent needs to stop criticizing, ordering, or preaching about the door slamming. He gave a "put-down" message. The parent should respond to what the child is happy about, enjoy and appreciate the child's accomplishments, and show appreciation for the two A's.

What parents think of as a little thing can be a mighty big thing to a child. When parents ignore accomplishments, they lose some very satisfying moments. Look at a more appreciative response.

Dad! Dad! Hey, I got two A's!
Great, come on up. Let's take a look at your report card.

If the door slamming is a problem, the child should be told why it is a problem. For example, "The noise of the door slamming really bugs me." Avoid ordering "Do not slam the door."

2. Child: "Mom, I'm home from the store."
Mom: "I hope you got everything."

The parent needs to stop judging and jumping to the conclusion that the child forgot something. The parent needs to show appreciation for what the child did. She should let the child know she is happy the child is home safely. She should check the bag before accusing him of forgetting something. If the child did forget something, the natural result of forgetting the item is not being able to have it. If it is something important, the child should be sent back to get it, again without the parent getting angry.

3. Child: "Hi Dad. I'm almost through with the lawn."
   Dad: "Just don't forget to sweep off the walk."

Dad should stop judging or jumping to the conclusion that the child will not sweep the walk and assuming that he needs to be told to do it. A better response would be: "I feel proud when the lawn looks so nice. Thanks so much for doing the lawn."

When your child does something for you, most likely you are freed you to do something else. You should let your child know what you were able to do and, if possible, how this helped the family. For example, "Because you did the lawn, I will be able to paint the kitchen for Mom, and that means we will have a beautiful lawn and a nicer looking kitchen." If you return later and find that the walk has been forgotten, you can say, "Gee—there sure is a lot of grass on the sidewalk. It really ruins the effect." Or you could say, "Please go sweep the grass off the sidewalk. The rest of the lawn looks so nice it is a shame to ruin the looks with grass on the sidewalk." Again, do not get angry. Yes, you may be angry because this is the twentieth time he has forgotten. You do need to remember that this new approach takes time to work. You may need to keep reminding yourself to try a new technique. A sign on the refrigerator may help you remember.

ATTACKING THE PROBLEM, NOT THE CHILD

Attacking the problem and not the child is another area where we need to switch from the Language of Unacceptance to the Language of Acceptance.

Being a parent is not easy. It can be very difficult to teach your child the things she will need to know to get along in this world. In most cases, you have taught your child many things by the age of five and the basics by eight. After that, you are only reinforcing what you have already taught. Sometimes you think you are still teaching your child by correcting her. This is usually read by your child as attacking HER instead of the problem.

When you constantly correct your child, she may feel that she cannot do anything right and eventually may even stop trying because she is afraid to make mistakes. Often when your child makes mistakes, like spilling something she is pouring, it is because of poor judgment due to a lack of experience. Because she is probably already upset by her mistakes, yelling or scolding her is like hitting a man when he is down and "only adds insult to injury."

ACTIVITY 8

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Examine the next set of parent-child interactions and see how we can attack the problem instead of the child.

1. Kathy, a five- or six-year-old, just spilled some cake and ice cream on her new birthday dress.
   Mom: "Oh Kathy, that's your new birthday dress. You are so clumsy."

The mother should stop calling names and shaming the child. Kathy already feels terrible about spilling in front of her friends at the party. She should not be made to feel that she is the problem. Can you tell what the problem really is? Take a minute and describe in your leaflet what you feel it is.

Here are some possible answers: The dress is dirty and needs to be cleaned. It may even stain. The floor needs to be cleaned. There is not enough cake and ice cream to go around. Parents are embarrassed because of the child's accident. The child is embarrassed.

This could be turned into a teaching situation. We can teach children how to get the stain out. We can let the child help clean up the mess, but we should never shame our children in front of friends.

2. Umpire: "Strike one. Strike two. Strike three; you're out."
   Dad, to son who struck out: "Listen to your father. You've got to keep your eye on the ball. Can't you concentrate?"

The father should stop ordering or commanding. He should not imply that the child is not successful because he can not concentrate. He should stop taking out his embarrassment on the child and he should praise the child for having the courage to try. Decide what the real problem is. Write what you think the problem is in the leaflet.

Maybe Dad needs to spend more time with the child playing ball. Why is the parent embarrassed? Helping the child clarify his feelings or at least letting the child know that you know how he feels, lets the child feel loved, for example, "You're really disappointed that you let the team down."

When we can let our children's successes and failures belong to them, as they rightfully do, our ego trips become fewer and we have no need to attack the child.

ACTIVITY 9

USING LABELS THAT SHOW LOVE

How a child thinks about herself is often determined by the label you put on her. When we use negative labels, a child will think negatively about herself. Children have a way of living up to their labels. In Leaflet 3 make a list of labels that were put on you when you were a child. Then list what you would like to have been called instead.

Labels That Hurt Me as a Child

____

____

____

____

What I Would Like to Have Heard Instead:

____

____

____

____

PRAISE THE ACCOMPLISHMENT

Suppose your child has built a beautiful model of a boat but delays cleaning up the mess he made while making it. You should praise the accomplishment, whatever it is. Frequently children do not clean up to our satisfaction. Rather than labeling them messy, see what you can honestly praise about the achievement. "That's a beautiful boat. You're sure good with your hands." This builds up the child's self-concept instead of tearing it down. If the mess still needs to be cleaned up, explain to your child why you need the mess cleaned up. "We're going to have company tonight and I'd really like the house to look especially neat. I could sure use some help."

Rather than use a label that hurts in anger or frustration, wait until a time when you can use a label that shows love. Perhaps later you can tell your son how nice it is to have him in the family because he is so creative and takes initiative to do things for himself.

If you can use the Language of Acceptance, your relationships at home will improve. As you practice using these rules, keep the following poem in mind.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance, and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

Dorothy Law Nolte

ACTIVITY 10

HOMEWORK

Practice using labels that show love at home this week. Focus on empowering your child to become a successful adult. Be prepared to discuss the results at the next class.

WHAT NEXT?

In the next lesson, we will learn about love. How much is too much? How can we let our children know we love them?

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NURTURANCE: BUILDING A HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM

LESSON 4 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will:

- learn ways to affirm and nurture children,
- become aware of ways to build children's self-esteem,
- learn ways to develop children's respect for self and others,
- practice ways to encourage children, and
- understand the emotional development of the five- to twelve-year-old child.

MATERIALS

Name tags
Leaflet 4 for each participant
Pencils

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Each of us at times feels rejected, discouraged, powerless, and unloved. In every person's mind there is a conflict between positive beliefs and their opposites. However, for the person with high self-esteem, doubts and fears are like shadows that pass through the mind. They may dim the person's sense of worth without casting it in darkness. In general, high self-esteem means that a person feels more self-respect than self-hate, more hope than despair, more courage than fear, more love than indifference.

This lesson will help parents learn how to nurture children. Parents will learn ways to help their children develop self-esteem and respect for other people. Resources to help develop these two factors in children will be discussed.

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

Did you practice using "Labels of Love" since the last lesson? What was this experience like in your family?

NURTURANCE

Sometimes life seems to be like a crazy quilt. At other times it may seem like the "Lone Star" pattern; while at rare times we may feel that the pieces fit together well. Amid all the changes, nurturance from a parent helps the child fit the bits and pieces of life together.

Relationships within our families can become stressed at times, while at other times our relationships, the pieces of the fabric of our life, flow toward peace as we feel nurtured and affirmed.

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"Nurture" means to help people grow by giving them affectionate care and attention. "Affirm" means to tell of positive feelings for a person.

"Affirmation" - words that say, "I care," "You are special," "You are important to me" - means comments that make you feel positive about yourself. People are loyal and move towards those who give positive comments. Family members need to continually affirm one another to develop, maintain, and nurture healthy self-esteem.

ACTIVITY 2

WAYS YOU RECEIVE NURTURANCE AND AFFIRMATION

Find a partner in the group (someone you did not know when you arrived tonight) and share things that help you feel nurtured and affirmed as a special, unique individual. List five of these ways in Leaflet 4. Report back to the group. Did some of you list the same ways? How could these be grouped? What are other ways that we can show our children that they are nurtured and affirmed?

You may ask, "How can I nurture my child?" We will discuss three essential ways that may seem so simple that we often do not see them. Even as adults, we will not thrive without eye contact, focused attention, and physical contact.

When you first think about it, eye contact may seem unimportant in relating to your child. However, in working with children, watching parents and children talk, and studying research findings, we realize how essential eye contact is. Eye contact is crucial in filling the child's emotional needs. A child uses eye contact with his parents to feed emotionally. The more parents make eye contact with their child to express their love, the more a child feels nourished.

What is eye contact? Eye contact is looking directly into the eyes of another person. Have you ever tried to talk with someone who keeps looking in another direction, unable to maintain eye contact with you? It is difficult. Our feelings toward the other person are often affected by this, too. We like people who are able to maintain pleasant eye contact with us and distrust those who do not. Eye contact is pleasant, of course, when it comes with kind words and a smile.

Parents often use eye contact to give other messages to their child. Sometimes parents may give loving eye contact only under certain conditions. An example is when a child performs well or brings pride to his parents. This is not a nurturing expression; it is conditional. A child cannot grow and develop well under conditional love. He must have praise and affection just for being himself.

Focused attention is different from eye contact. You can have great eye contact with your child and be thinking about something else. Focused attention means totally concentrating on your child and what he is saying.

Physical contact with parents helps children grow into warm and caring people. Someone has written that several hugs a day are necessary for the emotional well-being of each human.

ACTIVITY 3

KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT

Research in child development tells us how most children behave in various age groups. In Leaflet 4, you will see general patterns that occur in a child's emotional development.

You may find your child's behavior traits sometimes occur "on target." Sometimes their behavior traits may occur before or after the ages given. Remember, the list is only a guide. Each child is unique and special in her own way.

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD

_____ blames nearest person for own misdeeds
_____ likes to help mother
_____ may become angry and cry if corrected
_____ decides quickly what she wants
_____ likes to please adults
_____ is concerned about whether playmates are good or bad
_____ is not interested in money
_____ may do chores in return for allowance
_____ has pride and interest in clothes
_____ understands and respects rules
_____ likes to be told what to do
_____ may refuse to do a task if she is too busy

THE SIX-YEAR-OLD

_____ is highly active
_____ dislikes losing
_____ usually is not modest
_____ works in spurts
_____ is self-centered
_____ seeks to be the center of attention
_____ has positive attitude toward school
_____ is proud of self and skills
_____ may be more ready to dish out than receive criticism
_____ is competitive with brothers and sisters
_____ shows sensitivity about being called names, but calls others names
_____often pairs up and has best friend; tends to enjoy leaving out a third child

THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is active
_____ likes to know limits
_____ sees teacher as guide
_____ is less impulsive than the younger child
_____ worries about being liked
_____ complains of unfair treatment by playmates
_____ listens as well as talks at mealtime
_____ enjoys activities alone as well as with others
_____ relates better to brothers and sisters, but this depends on age
_____ is very sensitive to reactions of others
_____ has feelings of shame often centered on the body
_____ sees end result as more important than "route"

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

_____ is outgoing
_____ enjoys dramatic play
_____ is often demanding of parents
_____ has curiousity about nature, things, and people
_____ talks with adults rather than to adults
_____ is curious

_____ likes to help when in the mood
_____ is judgmental and critical both of self and others
_____ seeks new experiences; tries out things
_____ has attitude toward opposite sex which is a combination of attraction and hostility
_____ discovers parents are human and make mistakes
_____ often is more polite away from home than at home
_____ begins to select friends on basis of qualities or for a reason

THE NINE-YEAR-OLD

_____ is gaining self-confidence
_____ quarrels less
_____ perfects motor skills
_____ becomes more inner directed
_____ is less demanding of parent's attention
_____ likes organized play with very definite rules
_____ has bursts of emotion and impatience
_____ accepts failures and mistakes more realistically
_____ tries to give impression of being calm and steadfast
_____ is becoming selective in activities and will spend time with them
_____ may start puberty spurt of growth (girls)

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is helpful
_____ likes and enjoys friends
_____ begins to agree logically
_____ has individual interests that are long lasting
_____ has motor skills that are fairly well developed
_____ enjoys ability to "fit in" at home, school, and play
_____ has good relation with parents, teachers, and friends
_____ enjoys organized activities and has secret groups, codes, etc.
_____ seems to be at peace with self and the world (calm and self-confident)
_____ shows concern and cares about others
_____ begins development of special motor skills (sports, music, dancing, handcrafts)

THE ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD

_____ is very active
_____ eats more
_____ at times can be loud, boorish, and rude
_____ at times defies adult authority
_____ tends to be moody, sensitive
_____ may be cooperative, friendly, lively, and pleasant with strangers
_____ has frequent arguments with parents
_____ selects friends because of mutual interests
_____ is changing interest in the opposite sex

THE TWELVE-YEAR-OLD

_____ is outgoing, enthusiastic for short periods
_____ has extreme emotions - either really likes something or really hates it
_____ believes she is no longer a child
_____ is less self-centered
_____ places emphasis is on "best friend"
_____ can be critical of physical appearance (girls more so)
_____ sometimes has difficulty accepting praise

_____ participates less in family activities
_____ talks frequently of the opposite sex
_____ is restless, often day dreams, and "fools around" in school

Keep in mind that ALL children develop at different rates. You may provide extra opportunities and activities in areas where your child's behavior is different from the suggested age.

As you help your child to reach the goals that you and she set for her, be sure that you discipline in a positive and moderate way. This will help your child to do what is right because she wants to, not out of fear of punishment. (Refer to Lesson 3 on discipline.)

PLANNED TIME TOGETHER

One significant quality among strong families that was discovered by researcher Dr. Nick Stinnett was a consistent flow of appreciation among family members. This means that families need to take time to participate in choosing activities they would like to do together during the year. The following activities might be helpful to your family. Try them!

FAMILY FUN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Materials Needed:
Decorated coffee can
Colored construction paper
3- by 3-inch cardboard patterns, one for each family member
Scissors
Pencils

In this activity all members of the family are encouraged to participate in choosing the activities they would like to do during the coming year.

. During the first week of the New Year or the first week of this activity, place a colorfully decorated coffee can near the kitchen table. Label it "Family Fun Throughout the Year."

. Give each member of the family a different colored piece of paper, scissors, pencils and a 3- by 3-inch cardboard pattern. Children younger than five years old may need help.

. Trace the square pattern five times on the construction paper and cut out the squares.

. On each square, have each person write a different family activity that they would like to do on "Family Fun" night. Drop the slips of paper in the container.

. Each week, draw one activity from the container. The person whose color was selected helps direct the chosen activity. That person does not get another turn until one from all the other colors have been chosen. This method gives every individual a turn to choose an activity and adds mystery and excitement to the evening.

. Refill the coffee can with new cards when all the suggestions have been used.

MACMOTHER COUPONS

Make a list of activities the family can do together that require little money. One single parent that we know invented the idea of "MacMother Coupons" for her three children as a low cost, but thoughtful Christmas gift. This is what she did. Each child received a large brown paper envelope decorated with colored markers and stickers and his own name as well as the title

"MacMother Coupons." Inside each envelope were index cards, each listing a possible special activity for the child to "redeem" at some point in the year. The mother reported that the children did not think they would like the idea at first but grew to love having their own special coupons! Ideas for the coupons included: extra story at bedtime; a friend to stay over on an agreeable night; trip to the library or museum; a favorite meal on an agreeable night; a long discovery walk "without brother and sister" along; free hugs! Most of the activities would have been done throughout the year anyway. The coupons gave the children a sense of control and the planning in "spending" them. The coupon idea also gave the single parent a feeling of joy in sharing the special gift of self and a sense of relief that she could make memories by sharing time and not money.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem affects young people's behavior and attitudes. Children who have high self-esteem and who have found healthy ways to be nurtured by family and friends are ready for the future. They believe in themselves and feel competent. A child's self-esteem begins to develop very early. As a child grows to school age, self-esteem can be hurt by people in the home or outside the home.

Children today face many challenges as they grow up. The most common childhood disorder is depression, which affects between 5 and 10 percent of youth. Researchers also have found that adolescents in trouble have little self-esteem.

What is "self-esteem?" Self-esteem is the value we place on what we believe to be true about ourselves. Self-esteem involves the following sequence of thinking and feeling:

1. We have beliefs about ourselves and our relationships.
2. We place a value on these beliefs.
3. We experience a positive feeling about what we think is true of ourselves.

The following example illustrates how a child's self-esteem can be damaged by what he thinks a parent thinks or feels about him.

A child between 5 and 12 may believe that his parents do not love him if the parents cannot spend much time with him. "I must be awful," he concludes. "I'm just a nobody; how could anyone ever love somebody like me?" Such a child may have some anger at his parents for not taking time with him. Most of his anger will be turned inward. Self-hate is often at the core of low self-worth. Children without self-esteem believe there is something wrong with them.

ACTIVITY 4

MY BELIEFS ABOUT MYSELF

This activity may help you determine your self-esteem as a parent. It is important for you to have high self-esteem as you deal with the challenges you face in parenting. List at least five things you believe about yourself in Leaflet 4. Think about how you feel about these characteristics. You may like some, dislike others, and feel neutral about the others on your list. If you could add up all of your reactions to everything you believe about yourself, you would be determining your self-esteem.

Five beliefs about myself	How I feel about these beliefs:
1.	
2.	

3.

4.

5.

ACTIVITY 5

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM BELIEFS

List three things your child does that you can trace back to your beliefs. What are three unpleasant or harmful actions of your child that may have been influenced by your beliefs? See Leaflet 4. What might be going through your child's mind at the time? How does your child feel about herself? How has this self-image affected other aspects of her life? These actions have been influenced by your beliefs.

ACTIVITY 6

BELIEFS: ("IF IT IS TO BE, IT IS UP TO ME.")

Circle A or B, the one most closely related to your beliefs about yourself.

A. I'm as smart as anyone.
B. Most people are smarter than I am.

A. I am good looking.
B. I am ugly.

A. I feel good most of the time.
B. I feel bad a lot of the time.

A. I am in control over my life.
B. I am unlucky most of the time.

A. I try to improve things when they are not going well.
B. Nothing I try to do ever makes a difference.

If you circled mostly "b" choices, then your self-esteem could be improved. You may ask, "Can one raise his own self-esteem?" Perhaps this illustration might help us discover the answer. It is a little bit like putting seed in the ground. The seed has to do the growing. Without nurturing with water, sun, and nutrients, the seed will wither and die. A child of five to twelve will "do the growing." His growth and self-esteem will be nurtured by the liberal sprinkling of praise, fairness, kindness, and love.

A young child needs nurturing from someone else to begin raising self-esteem. The self-esteem of adults can not only be improved by others, but an adult can improve his own self-esteem. Ways to do this include positive self talk, trying harder and achieving, and doing things to help other people.

RESPECT

We owe each other respect. We cannot expect to be respected, if we do not respect others around us. When we respect others, we respect their property and personal belongings as well as their self-esteem. Respect is a way of showing support for and cooperation with each other.

Can you imagine a ship where crew members did not respect each other's personal belongings or their ability to do the job? The ship would soon stop functioning because of the confusion. In a family we live in close quarters, like a ship's crew. Respect for each other is one of the things that keeps chaos from breaking out. When we grow in respect for each other's abilities, property, and self-esteem, we soon see how valuable each member of our crew really is. As you model respect for yourself and others, your child will become more respectful.

ACTIVITY 7

PEOPLE I RESPECTED

Think back to your childhood about an adult whom you respected and admired. As you recall this person, think about what this person was like. List the characteristics and discuss. See Leaflet 4.

FEARS

Fear exists. It has been necessary for survival since the beginning of time. It lets people know that danger is near. Folklore from around the world is full of tales of heroes who have no fear. However, fear is present every day in the lives of children. It is an emotion that is necessary in a child's development.

The fears that children experience as part of their daily living can affect their lives. Children's fears vary according to their age and individual differences. To help children cope with fears a number of books that deal with fear are available. They can be used with children to overcome, to reduce, or to eliminate their fears. See resources at the end of Parenting Renewal notebook for suggested book titles.

We have all had butterflies in our stomachs. It happens on the first day of school, before a test, or on a new job. A school-age child's fears often center around performance in the classroom. Fear happens most anytime we try something new or risky. "If you have butterflies in your stomach, ask them into your heart." (Cooper Edens).

Such "butterflies" make us feel nervous and sometimes we wish we could just go back to bed. The best thing we can do, and sometimes the only thing, is go right ahead and walk into that situation with head held high. We will probably feel awkward at first. That is natural and it will pass. Our nervousness can change into excitement and joy for what we are doing. We can begin to feel proud when we walk through our fear. This means thinking about each step of what you are afraid to do.

It is a true accomplishment when we do not let our fear stop us — when, instead, we let the butterfly in our hearts unfold. As a parent, you must experience the "butterflies" before you can explain them to your child. You must be able, on occasion, to go right ahead with a new experience in spite of the butterflies. You must be able to do this before you can coach your child to do so.

Speaking words of encouragement is a good way to help build up someone who is fearful or lacks confidence. Critical comments may lower your child's self-esteem, destroy her ideas, and keep her bound in the fear that she cannot do anything right. As parents, we may find it important to remember this old Japanese proverb when dealing with our children, "One kind word can warm up three winter months."

ACTIVITY 8

HOMEWORK

In the following activity the comments are encouraging and positive. Circle the comments that you would like to use when speaking to other members of your family. If you can think of others, list them. Along with positive comments you might want to include some gestures of affection. Try a pat on the head or shoulder or an arm around a shoulder or waist. A hug or a kiss is appropriate too! Be prepared to share at the next lesson.

You've got it made.
You've just about mastered that!
You're on the right track.
OUTSTANDING!
You are very good at that.
You did very well.
That's very much better!
FANTASTIC!
I'm happy to see you working
I knew you could do it.
GREAT!
You're doing a good job.
Now you have it!
That's the best your have ever done.
Now you've figured it out.

SUMMARY

Parents affect their child's self-esteem in many ways. This lesson has led us to think about these ways.

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be about your child's education. You will learn how you can work with the school to help your child succeed in school.

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EDUCATION:
HELPING PREPARE THE CHILD FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL

LESSON 5 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will
- provide a private place for the child to study at home,
- gain skills in helping the child be successful in school,
- encourage and promote reading,
- discuss that being different is what makes you unique,
- explain the pros and cons of respecting school officials and the rights of others,
- praise and encourage spontaneity and creativity,
- explain the importance of good study habits,
- explain how to make the most of TV, and
- encourage the child to respect differences in people.

MATERIAL

Leaflet 5 for each participant
Name Tags
Paper
Pencils
Books

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

Please find a partner and tell about something you have helped your child learn at home. Examples: how to use a dictionary, the value of getting along with others, an appreciation of who he is. Also tell how you used encouraging and positive comments with your child last week. *(At the end of two to five minutes, conduct a discussion by inviting people to share with the large group.)*

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

One purpose of this lesson is to encourage you to help your child to become successful in school. Another purpose is to help you become involved in your child's school. Research shows that most successful adults have been successful in elementary and middle school. Parents can have a very important effect on the child's success in early school years.

This lesson contains guidelines for parents that focus on helping children succeed in school by:
- getting off to a good start,
- developing good study habits,

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- enjoying reading,
- respecting those who are different,
- making and keeping friends,
- making the most of television,
- respecting school property and those responsible, and
- being spontaneous and creative.

(NOTE: If children are already in school, skip to activity 3)

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

The first day of school is a milestone in your child's life. Your understanding at this "turning point" is important to the child's future attitude toward school and to his or her healthy growth and development.

Experts in child mental health and development emphasize that you, the parent, can play an important role in starting your child off with the self- confidence needed throughout life. This self-confidence is built upon good feelings about parents and family, about authority figures at school, and about other children. Most important, however, is a sound self-concept.

Here are some things for you to keep in mind:

1. Recognize that the day your child first goes off to school is an important event. Realizing this can help you make it a positive experience. It may be the first major separation from the secure and familiar world of home and family, and it marks entrance into a new universe of friendship, learning, and adventure—a world that parents can never again entirely share. The greatest gift to your child is loving support and understanding and time to listen to his experiences in the "new world" of school.

2. Remember that learning to like school and liking to learn are closely related. Your child's first school experience can contribute to a good or bad attitude toward school in the years ahead.

3. Be prepared to handle your own feelings. Many children do very well on the first day, and it is the parent who experiences adjustment difficulties. The independence parents have taught their children becomes vividly clear and startles many parents.

4. Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect and answering all questions honestly. Children need to know the number of days and length of time they will be in school, as well as how to get there and back. A child may be anxious and needs to know details to handle the stress involved. Employed mothers and fathers should make certain that the child knows the arrangements for before- and after-school care.

5. Convey a positive attitude about school. If the parents show enthusiasm for what the school experience can mean, the child is more likely to look forward to it.

6. Make transportation plans clear. If the child is to walk to school, walk the route together a few times before and after school starts. If there are other children from your neighborhood who are the same age, see if they can walk together. If a child goes to school by bus, help the child identify the vehicle. Encourage older children to watch over younger ones. Once the bus arrives, be direct; say goodbye and allow the child to board alone. If the child cries, try not to overreact; in most cases the tears will soon disappear.

7. Create a normal, routine atmosphere at home the first few days of school. Do not deny or avoid the uniqueness of the situation, but take an active interest in what your child tells you about school when she comes home. Be a good listener, allowing your child time to talk about the school day.

ACTIVITY 2

EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

In Leaflet 5, make a list of new experiences your child can expect at school. *(Examples are: snacks and lunches, safety practices, respect for the rights of others.)* How can you help your child prepare for these?

ACTIVITY 3

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

In Leaflet 5, make a list of materials, advice, and knowledge that you have already provided your child that will help make her school experience a success.

DEVELOPING GOOD STUDY HABITS

Developing good study habits is a must if your child is to be successful in school. You as a parent can do several things to ensure your child's good study habits. First, make a quiet, cozy, and private space for your child to study. See that the right study tools, such as dictionary, pencils, pencil sharpener, rulers, and paper, are there. See that the lighting is correct for reading and that the TV and radio are turned off when the child is studying.

The second thing you can do to help your child develop good study habits is to foster a good attitude about studying. One set of parents set aside one hour every night when all family members either studied or read something to increase their knowledge. Then everyone came together for a bedtime snack and shared what they had learned for the past hour. Your family may not be able to set aside that much time, but some time would be helpful.

ACTIVITY 4

GOOD ATTITUDES ABOUT STUDYING

In Leaflet 5, make a list of ways to help your child develop good attitudes about studying. *(Take your child on a special shopping trip for school supplies. Read and discuss what you read with your child. Take a course yourself. Let your child see you enjoy studying. Treat learning as something fun to do.)*

There are other things you can do to help your child develop good study habits. You can help him learn to make a set of goals for each time he studies. You can teach him how to outline a chapter or write a set of questions and answers for each chapter. He should do more than the teacher requires. One fifth grader looked the spelling words up in the dictionary. She wrote down the definitions, but did not learn how to use the words in a sentence. She thought she had studied enough because that was all the teacher required.

ENJOYING READING

Children learn what is important by watching their parents. Encourage your child to read and let him see you read. If you read regularly, your child will understand that reading is important and worth doing. Reading to the child is fun for both of you. Listening to a parent read helps the child in learning about raising and lowering his voice and pausing for punctuation. As soon as the child masters enough words to read a simple primer, let the child read aloud and "show off." Cheer like crazy.

Books help people learn how to: deal with grief, solve problems, cook, be safe, deal with anger, deal with fears of all sorts, and much, much more.

ACTIVITY 5

BOOKS HELP US LEARN

What else can we learn from books? In a small group, make a list of things we can learn from books. See which group can get the longest list.

ACTIVITY 6

GOOD BOOKS

In a small group, share the name of a good book you have shared with your child. Tell what you liked about the book and what it taught your child.

Or

Look at the collection of books the program leader has collected from the local library. Select one you would like to check out and share with your child.

RESPECTING THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

In the early years, parents have the greatest influence and most opportunities to shape children's environments. This is a good time to encourage a variety of experiences, for example: chances to interact with boys and girls of varying ages, cultures, and backgrounds. We want our children to learn to feel comfortable with others somewhat unlike themselves. Talk to your child about differences with which he may come in contact. Stress that being different is okay. Being different is something that everyone must face at one time or another. The fact is that no two people are alike. Here are a few examples of differences:

Race: Race is a noticeable difference. No one race is superior to another. Your child may ask "Why is she one color and I'm another?" Let your child know that being different in race is only a color factor.

Handicap: Your child may see someone in a wheelchair. Naturally, your child will stare. Let your child know that a handicapped person can still perform to the best of her ability and can be a worthwhile person.

Weight and Size: Children often tease each other about size. Help your child learn that people come in different shapes and sizes, and these differences are okay.

ACTIVITY 7

PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT

Select a partner. Share a story about someone you have known who was laughed at because she was different.

Or

Listen to the story of the "Ugly Duckling" and explain why the ugly duckling was discriminated against.

MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

If we listen to children, we realize that their friendships are very important. Making friends, playing with friends, fighting and making up, and sometimes even losing friends occupies a large portion of children's time and attention. Children's relationships with one another provide opportunities for learning that are different from those provided by parents and teachers.

Adults' relationships with children often are very warm and friendly, but they tend to focus on protecting and caring for the children and guiding them toward becoming more grown-up. Children think of adults as all-powerful and all-knowing, rather than as individuals with strengths and weaknesses. Because adults control resources that children want and because adults approve or disapprove of their behavior, children try to gain adults' approval.

In relationships with their peers, children can make equal contributions and can participate in setting standards of behavior. They engage in discussion, bullying, negotiation, and compromise to reach agreement in their play. Through these interactions, children discover ways they are alike and ways they are different from one another. They come to recognize that they are not equals in all ways, though they have much in common.

Through peer relationships and friendships, children learn what adults cannot teach them, namely social skills. These include techniques for making and maintaining contact, for communicating effectively, and for dealing with conflicts. Adults can serve as useful advisers and models of these skills, but children need equals with whom to experiment and practice.

ACTIVITY 8

WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD GAIN AND KEEP FRIENDS

In Leaflet 5, make a list of ways to help your child make and keep friends. *(Let your child have a birthday party or spend-the-night party. Take your child to Sunday Church School to meet schoolmates in a different setting. Share a book about friendship with your child.)*

MAKING THE MOST OF TELEVISION

In its short lifetime, television has become a big influence on the human family. Television's negative impact on children's reading habits - and therefore their thinking - has been enormous.

Television has been described as the "plug-in drug," and not without reason. Its control of children is demanding and extensive. It will largely determine what they wear and what they will not wear, what they eat and what they will not eat, what they play and what they will not play, what they will read and what they will not read. Our children must be taught in the home and in the classroom how to cope with television. They must be taught to control it instead of letting it control them.

One problem with watching television and playing video games all afternoon and evening is that children do not learn to generate activities. They just sit passively. How will these children perform as adults if they have no initiative?

Children today are not getting enough exercise when they sit in school all day and watch television all afternoon. Wise parents will encourage physical activities every day after school.

On the other hand, television does not have to be a totally negative influence. As a tool for educating, informing, and entertaining, it has unlimited potential. Unfortunately, current programming devotes itself almost exclusively to entertaining, thereby falling far short of its potential.

ACTIVITY 9

TELEVISION AND YOUR FAMILY

Viewing television can be educational. In the leaflet you will find a list of ways to use television to enhance the education of your child. Place a check mark beside the ways you intend to try in the future.

__ Watch a program together. Then ask the child questions like: "What would you have done in that case?" "What did he do wrong?" These help children form judgmental skills.

__ Allow your child to watch only programs that you carefully select.

__ Limit the total time your child watches television and insist upon physical exercise every day.

__ Allow your child to watch programs that are strictly for entertainment as rewards for school work well done.

RESPECTING SCHOOL PROPERTY AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE

Learning to obey school rules will help your child learn to operate in other systems that have rules. Organizations, places of business, and society in general have rules that we must obey even if we do not always agree with the rules.

Help your child learn to respect the janitor, the lunchroom worker, the principal, and teachers. This does not mean that you try to make your child afraid to speak out or to ask questions. Rather teach your child good manners by setting a good example. At home, wait until someone finishes talking before you begin. Say "please" and "thank you." Talk in a quiet tone of voice. Stand up when someone older than you enters the room. Show respect to all human beings and calmly and firmly insist upon these behaviors from your child.

ACTIVITY 10

GOOD MANNERS

In the leaflet make a list of other good manners that will help your child succeed in school. *(Wait until someone finishes talking before talking, do not burp out loud, and do not cough on others. Hold the door open for others.)*

BEING SPONTANEOUS AND CREATIVE

Spontaneity and creativity are important talents your child may have. Help the child to understand that his talents are a gift and that he should create with these talents. Encourage the child to volunteer to use his talents as often as possible.

Your child may be creative with words, art, or music. The child may wish to explore and try new songs, new subjects, or new ways of becoming creative. Always praise your child for creativity. Two ways to foster creativity are to supply the needed tools and to give the child free time and space to create.

ACTIVITY 11

PROMOTING CREATIVITY

In the leaflet list ways to encourage creativity. *(Avoid providing all the answers. Give your child free time. Tell him his ideas are good, if they are. Let him help decide. Avoid laughing at what he makes or builds. Say "That was a good idea, if - - -." Praise accomplishments.)*

BECOMING PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Your child's education can be greatly enriched by your involvement in her school. In these times of less money, schools need parents' support more than ever. Although some schools are not used to giving parents meaningful things to do, your interest can change this. By expressing your interest, respect, and good will, you and the school can work together for the benefit of children.

Both teachers and parents need support and recognition. Have you told your child's teacher what you appreciate about his or her work? Why not write a note to your child's teacher?

ACTIVITY 12

COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATION

You can become involved in your child's school experience by helping the teacher. Try to put yourself in the shoes of a teacher receiving two phone calls described in Leaflet 5.

Phone Call 1:

> Hello, Mrs. Williams? This is Serena Taggart, Becky's mother. I wanted to let you know right off this fall that I'm delighted that you have Becky interested in science projects. Yesterday she asked if I could take her to the library this weekend to see their exhibit on the planets....I have an idea I'd like to talk over with you. Is this a good time?....Oh, good. I was thinking that the students might learn a lot from making papier-mache models of the

planets and hanging them from the ceiling of the classroom. I work in a doctor's office and have Wednesday afternoons off. I could come in Wednesday afternoons for the next month and help with this project if you think it would fit in with what they're learning.

Phone Call 2:

Hello, Mrs. Williams, this is Jean Taylor, Andy's mother. I'm really upset about the math grade you gave Andy on his midyear report card. The math papers he has been bringing home all year seem to have a lot of mistakes on them. This cannot go on any longer. I can come in every morning and drill the students with flash cards.....What do you mean you do not use flash cards anymore? They worked when I was in school, and I know my times tables!

Which approach is best? Why?

ACTIVITY 13

HOMEWORK

Choose at least one new approach that you learned in this lesson to try with your child this week. Be prepared to share the results.

SUMMARY

This lesson was about helping your child succeed in school. What have you learned and how you will use it?

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson is about health and wellness of children. There is more to it than you may think! Please come on time.

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WELLNESS: NUTRITION, HEALTH AND SAFETY

LESSON 6 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will
- recognize signs of healthy children,
- become aware of health practices,
- identify common causes of accidents,
- describe safety practices, and
- plan meals for young children that follow the Guide to Good Health Choices.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 6 for each participant
Name tags
Magic markers
Tape
Daily Food Guide visual
Chalkboard
Chalk
Pencils

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

The goal of this lesson is to develop good health habits in your child that will carry over into adulthood.

Wellness is the process of becoming and staying healthy. One needs to take personal responsibility for health and practice a healthy lifestyle. One of the goals of effective parenting is to help the child reach and maintain the best levels of physical, emotional, and social health. Signs of good health usually can be seen in appearance, vitality, and the absence of frequent illnesses.

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

What did you do to make your child's school experience more positive? What suggestions from the last lesson did you try? What worked for you? *(Call on parents who seem to have something to share.)*

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ACTIVITY 2

SHARING

Sit near a person who is about the same height as you are. This person will be your partner for this lesson. *(Allow time for participants to choose partners.)* Share with your partner a food your child does not like. *(Allow a few minutes for discussion.)*

NUTRITION

During these early years you have some control over what your child eats. You can guide your child into a pattern of eating that can shape her likes and dislikes and the types of nutrients she will eat.

Children learn by example. They imitate adults whom they admire. If you eat a variety of foods, they will, too.

NUTRITION IN THE EARLY YEARS

Nutrient needs change steadily throughout life. They vary from individual to individual, depending on the rate of growth, sex, previous nutrition, health history, and many other factors.

To provide all the needed nutrients, a variety of foods from each of the food groups is recommended. To estimate serving size for meats, fruits, and vegetables, a serving is loosely defined as one tablespoon per year of age. Thus, at five years of age, a serving of any of these foods would be five tablespoons. Because the serving size adjusts as the child grows older, this rule of thumb is appropriate until the teen years.

During the day the average child up to age ten or so needs to eat every four to six hours. This helps to maintain a blood glucose concentration high enough to support the activity of the brain and the nervous system. A well-nourished child will be alert, energetic, and responsive to external stimuli. A good diet will include enough calories to assure a normal rate of growth and to provide for the energy needs of the body.

A GUIDE TO HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

The Guide for Healthy Food Choices will help you make wise and varied food selections. It divides food into six major food groups according to the nutrients they contain.

The **Milk, Cheese, Yogurt Group** provides protein, calcium, phosphorus, vitamins A and D, and riboflavin.

The **Meat, Poultry, and Fish Group** provides protein, thiamine, niacin, and iron.

Both the **Vegetable Group** and the **Fruit Group** provide vitamins A and C, carbohydrates, and fiber.

The **Bread, Cereal, and Grains Group** provides carbohydrates, B vitamins, and iron.

The **Fats, Sweets, Sweetened Drinks and Alcoholic Beverages Group** provides fat and carbohydrates.

CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

FOOD GROUP	SERVINGS PER DAY	COUNT AS A SERVING:
Breads, Cereals, and grains	6 or more	1 slice of whole-grain bread, 1/2 hamburger bun, 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin; 4-6 crackers; 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, grits, spaghetti, macaroni, or 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Make at least one-half of your servings whole grain.
Fruits	2 to 4	1 fresh, medium-size piece of fruit, such as an apple, banana, orange, grapefruit half, or melon wedge; 1/2 cup of juice; 1/2 cup cooked, canned, or frozen fruit; or 1/4 cup dried fruit. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Eat raw fruits as often as possible.
Vegetables	3 to 5	1/2 cup cooked or raw vegetables or 1 cup leafy raw vegetables, such as cabbage or spinach. Eat a variety of foods from this group. Eat raw vegetables as often as possible.
Meat, Poultry, and Fish	2 to 3	A serving of lean meat, poultry, or fish is 2 ounces. Serving sizes will differ. A piece of meat the size and thickness of the palm of a woman's hand is about 3-5 ounces; a man's palm, 5-7 ounces. Count 1 egg, 1/2 cup cooked dried beans and peas, or 2 tablespoons peanut butter as 1 ounce of meat. Eat a variety of foods from this group.
Milk, Cheese, and Yogurt	Children (6-10 yrs) 3 Teens (11-18 yrs) 4	1 cup of buttermilk, skim, low-fat, or whole milk; 1 cup of plain or low-fat yogurt; 1 1/2 ounces of cheese; 2 slices of packaged cheese; 2 cups of low-fat cottage cheese; 1 3/4 cups of ice cream or frozen yogurt. Eat a variety of foods from this group.
Fats, Sweets, Sweetened Drinks Alcoholic Beverages	Limit	Limit fats, sweets, sodas, and other sweetened beverages. Choose liquid vegetable oil more often than solid fats and shortenings. Limit bacon and other high fat meats such as sausage and luncheon meats.

ACTIVITY 3

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Look at Leaflet 6 and choose the best answer for the question about afterschool snacks.

The best beverage to have in your refrigerator for an afterschool snack is:

1. Milk
2. Carbonated beverage
3. Sweetened flavored drink like Kool-Aid

(Answer - 1. Milk has more vitamins and minerals.)

NUTRITION AT SCHOOL

The U.S. Government funds several programs to provide nutritious, high- quality meals for children at school. School lunches are designed to meet certain requirements. They must include specified servings of milk, protein-rich foods (meat, poultry, fish, cheese, eggs, legumes, or peanut butter), vegetables, fruits, and breads or other grain foods.

Many schools are trying to meet today's ideals of healthful food. They offer low-fat or non-fat milk instead of whole milk. Many schools offer salad bars, providing students an opportunity to create their own meal from a selection of nutritious foods.

TELEVISION'S INFLUENCE ON NUTRITION

In the United States, studies tell us children spend as much time watching television as they do attending school. Obesity increases for each hour of television viewing.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The total food eaten during the day is what one counts. So, if your child does not get all he needs in one meal, he can get it at another meal or in a snack.

NUTRIENT SUPPLEMENTS

With a balanced day's food intake, vitamin pills and other nutrient supplements usually are not necessary. In fact, taking them may give you more vitamins or minerals than you need. Too many vitamins and minerals can be unhealthy. For example, very large amounts of vitamin A can make your child sick. Supplements cannot be a substitute for a balanced diet because they do not provide all the nutrients that food does and they have no calories. Ask your child's doctor or a registered dietitian for advice.

OBESITY

Every day researchers learn more and more about adolescent obesity. Here are some helpful suggestions you can use with your family.

1. Teach children to eat slowly, to pause and enjoy their food, and to stop eating when they are full.
2. Allow children to determine their own limits at the table — what, when, and how much to eat, within reason.
3. Encourage physical activity on a daily basis to promote strong skeletal and muscular development and to form habits that will support good health throughout life.

DENTAL HEALTH

Adequate nutrition is needed to help the mouth and teeth develop properly. This means providing enough protein, calcium, vitamins C and D, and fluoride. Where local water supplies are not fluoridated, direct application of fluoride to the teeth at intervals may be necessary. Remember, we must restrict the sweet foods that cause tooth decay. This means brushing the teeth or rinsing the mouth with water after meals, avoiding snacks that contain sticky sweets, and dislodging persistent particles with dental floss. An appointment with a dentist should be made every six months for thorough cleaning and fluoride treatments as necessary.

Young people may be resistant to some of the practices they need to adopt to invest in their future. Remember, you are their most valuable teacher and role model. Developing healthful habits is easier than changing poor habits later.

PATHWAY TO A WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

Chances are that, as you achieve a wellness lifestyle, your children will also. A wellness lifestyle comes from first making an overall decision to lead a healthy life and then making smaller decisions along the way. Health habits begun in childhood stick with us. They may extend our lives and improve the quality of life while we are living.

How do you go from choosing a wellness lifestyle to having one? A well person manages to get his physical, emotional, and social needs met. While these needs are different for each person, the process for meeting them is the same.

> Step 1 - Know yourself. For instance, you may need more sleep than someone else, or you may need to have more time to be alone than do your friends.
>
> Step 2 - Set goals. Decide to go to bed at 10:00 p.m. so you can get enough sleep to feel good the next day. Decide to have some time to be alone.
>
> Step 3 - Make a plan. You may need to rearrange some things, such as having dinner earlier or omitting one television program, to reach your goal.
>
> Step 4 - Act on your plan. Your self-esteem will increase if you follow your plan. If you miss sticking to your plan at times, do not dwell on it. Just follow your plan the next day.
>
> Step 5 - Check your results. If your plan works for you, GREAT! If not, think about why it is not working and try something else.

Most important, as a parent let your child watch you go through the process of making healthy decisions. When she was very young, you made health decisions for her. In middle childhood she will make some of them on her own. You are her best teacher, and you teach by example.

ACTIVITY 4

WELLNESS CHECKSHEET

Directions: Place a check by the good health characteristics your child has.

Physical Health: My child
______ is using daily hygiene habits.
______ seldom feels tired or run down.
______ gets eight hours sleep each night.
______ regularly uses dental floss and a soft toothbrush.
______ exercises each day.
______ eats breakfast each day.
______ eats a variety of foods.
______ practices good posture.
______ eats regular meals.
______ makes wise choices for snacks.
______ goes to the doctor for an annual physical.
______ has had a DPT shot since four years of age.

Mental Health: My child
______ asks for help when he needs it.
______ is happy most of the time.
______ sometimes likes to be alone.
______ can name three things he does well.
______ feels okay about crying and allows himself to do so.
______ gives others sincere compliments.
______ accepts compliments.
______ listens to and thinks about constructive criticism.
______ can say no to people when appropriate without feeling guilty.
______ is satisfied with his effort if he has done his best.
______ expresses his thoughts and feelings to others.
______ has at least one hobby or interest to pursue and enjoy.

Social Health: My child
______ meets people easily.
______ is comfortable entering into conversation with new acquaintances.
______ continues to participate in an activity even though he does not get his way in an argument.
______ has at least one or two close friends.
______ can accept other people's ideas and suggestions.
______ can say no to his friends if they are doing something he does not wish to do.
______ can accept the differences in friends and classmates.
______ is comfortable carrying on conversation with an adult.
______ tries to work out problems with others.
______ avoids gossiping about people.
______ accepts rules in group activity.
______ accepts work responsibilities as well as play opportunities.

Adapted with permission from:
Duyff, R. L., Wichard, R. N., Hallman, J. P., & Reid, J. C. (1988). Family Health. California: Glenco.

SCORING

The highest possible score for each area is 12. If your child's score is 10 to 12 in any area, his level of health and safety in that area is very good. A score of 7 to 9 is good, 4 to 6 is fair, and below 4 indicates a general area on which you and your child need to be working.

USING HEALTH SERVICES

Visit the doctor or health department for:

- Routine checkups such as annual examinations
- Immunizations
  Four- to six-year-olds get DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus); thereafter, they get a TD (Tetanus and Diphtheria) every 10 years, or if they get a cut or scratch in between.
- Diagnostic tests - blood pressure, urinalysis, blood tests, and X-rays.

Be ready to tell the doctor the following:

- My child's symptoms are________________________.
- They are brought on by ________________________.
- They get worse when________________________.
- They go away when ________________________.
- Have treated her with ________________________.

MAINTAIN HEALTH RECORDS

Children under the age of consent (eighteen in South Carolina) should keep signed medical releases at school, with the doctor, and in the family health record. In this way, they can be treated in an emergency without waiting for their parents to get to the scene.

The family health record will include family name; father's and mother's occupation; family members' birthplaces and dates; physician's name, address, and phone number; serious illnesses with date and treatment; immunizations with dates; allergies; insurance policies; and family medical history.

PREPARING FOR HOSPITAL STAY

When doctors recommend hospitalization for surgery, diagnostic tests, or treatments, there are some things patients should know.

Before agreeing to surgery, patients should find out as much as possible to avoid unnecessary surgery or surprises. A second opinion and alternatives should be explored. The doctors should also explain the procedures, the benefits and risks, how long the hospital stay might be, how long the recovery will be, and hospital fees. Children should be involved in the discussion as to what to expect throughout the hospital stay. A tour of the hospital would be helpful.

HOME, SAFE HOME

You and your family can live safely and reduce your risks of accidents and other personal hazards. The conscious choices about what you do, where you go, and how you do things affect the safety of your family.

Death and injury due to accidents for children ages five to twelve most often involve motor vehicles, drownings, recreational toys, falls, burns, and fires.

School-age children are very independent. They do most activities without adult supervision. They need to learn, understand, and obey safety rules on their own.

Children of this age may have chores to do around the home and yard. They must be instructed in the use of power equipment. Power machinery, such as lawn mowers and tractors, has the potential to be very dangerous. Children who use machinery must have very good instructions and be able to show their skill. Power machinery should never be considered a toy or used in a playful manner.

Five- to twelve-year-olds are very active. They can travel great distances in a short time on a bicycle, skateboard, or roller skates. They must have the right-size equipment and good safety instructions.

Occasionally children this age will not follow rules. Caregivers must be prepared to put away wheeled toys for a reasonable time. This will emphasize the serious risks of breaking rules about riding.

Teach children these bicycle safety rules:

- Never ride double.
- Ride single file.
- Ride with traffic.
- Walk bike across heavy traffic at a crosswalk.
- Lock bicycles.
- Use signals for every turn.
- Be sure bike has clean reflectors and lights that work.

In the park and on the playground, accidents often occur because of faulty equipment or misuse of equipment. Most of these victims are between the ages of five and ten. Accidents are often associated with falls from playground equipment, swings, climbing equipment, slides, and seesaws.

The exploring nature of five- to twelve-year-old children will lead them into unfamiliar places. Explain carefully and clearly that dumps and junkyards, underground holes, mine shafts, blasting sites, railroad property, abandoned structures, new construction sites, quarries, irrigation ditches, and excavation projects are always off limits. When they still want to explore, arrange family nature trips, tours, or visits to other areas of interest.

ACTIVITY 5

OUTINGS WITH CHILDREN

Share with participants in group special outings enjoyed by you and your children. These could be field trips, tours, or picnics. *(Allow time for discussion.)* Tell what dangers you experienced and how you prevented them.

DANGERS

In general, children under the age of ten cannot fully understand complicated traffic events. Traffic situations often mean children must hear, see, judge distance, and guess timing. They must also figure out what drivers will do. Accidents occur when children cross streets in the middle of the block, dart out into the street, and walk on the wrong side of the street. Teach your children to always walk facing oncoming traffic and to wear brightly colored clothing when walking at night.

Another cause of death for the five- to twelve-year old is fires. Playing with matches and smoking are two reasons for unexpected fires. Adults should instruct children in proper use of matches and set strict rules on where fires can be built, and only with adult supervision. Never leave children alone in a room with a fire in a fireplace.

Children must know proper procedures for evacuating a burning building, the fire department phone number, and location. This is especially true when older children are responsible for younger children.

Children in this age group enjoy toys that fly, shoot, or come apart. They are often involved in projects where safe use of sewing equipment, leathercraft tools, woodburning tools, and chemistry sets is important. Use of these tools can be approved after the child shows knowledge and skill in use, care, and storage of equipment.

Great caution is important anytime a child plays with toys that fly or shoot. Gun use should be forbidden until a youth has good coordination and the maturity to control emotions without adult supervision. No youth should hunt before passing an approved hunter-safety course. Even toy guns with parts that can be shot out of the barrel can be very harmful if misused.

ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Children with flu or chicken pox should not be given aspirin.
- Ice or a very cold cloth will keep bruises from swelling too much. After a bad bump, if a child becomes very sleepy, is dizzy, or has a stiff neck, call a doctor immediately.
- For a mild burn or surface redness, cold water will take away the pain. For bad bruises, blisters, or skin burned away, get medical help right away. Cover the burn with a clean cloth bandage or gauze. Do not press it against the burn.
- Stay calm in an emergency. Keep children calm.
- Learn how to use CPR - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation - and Heimlich Maneuver.
- Keep all plastic bags away from children, their toys, their play area, and their beds.
- Automobile accidents hurt and kill more children than any other type of accident. Always wear a seat safety belt when riding in a car, truck, or van. Special car-seat restraints should be used for children who weigh less than 40 pounds.
- Signs of shock are cold, clammy skin, pale face, chills, shallow breathing, nausea, or vomiting. Have victim lie down, feet elevated, unless this would make the injury worse. Keep victim lightly covered.
- The Skull and Crossbones sign means danger!
- The picture of Mr. Yuk means children should stay away because there is poison inside.. When someone eats or drinks something poisonous, act quickly to get the poison out, or off, or to dilute it. Read the container label for first-aid instructions. First call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-922-1117 or your doctor. Have the container ready so you can read the label to the Poison Control Center helper. Have a one-ounce bottle of Syrup of Ipecac available in case the physician advises its use.
- Crawl low in a smoky room or hall. The air near the floor is better.
- Keep a list of telephone numbers to use in emergency situations by the telephone.

ACTIVITY 6

HOMEWORK

Remove or correct hazards that could cause an accident or fire in your home, your school, or your church. Make a chart with dates, hazards, and how you corrected them. Help your child draw a floor plan of the house and mark the fire escape routes.

SUMMARY

Each day we make choices that influence our health. We make decisions about food, exercise, rest, and hygiene. Each choice is important. All of our decisions add up. Together they affect our health now and even years from now. Our health habits also affect our children's health habits because they learn from us. Developing healthful habits is easier than changing poor habits.

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be on teaching your children about sexuality.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND REFERENCES

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AWARENESS: SEX EDUCATION

LESSON 7 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will

- identify some personal values, feelings, and attitudes about sex that they want to pass on to their children,
- understand their role in the sex education of their children, and
- determine how much to tell their children at different age levels.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 7 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Welcome to the Parenting Renewal class on Awareness. We have chosen this title for the class that covers sex education. Children in the middle childhood years are aware of differences in sexes. They are noticing changes in their own bodies and feelings. This class will help you become more aware of your own attitude about sex. It will also help you feel more comfortable passing your values about sex on to your children.

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

How many safety hazards did you correct at home this week. Think for a minute and count them silently. Please tell a partner about them. Did your child draw a fire escape route for your house?

ACTIVITY 2

LEARNING ABOUT SEX

How did you learn about sex? Please write your answer on the space provided in Leaflet 7. *(Give out Leaflet 7 and pencils. Allow time for participants to write the answer.)* Please share what you have written with the group.

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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND YOURSELF?

Long ago the wise men of Greece wrote on one of their temples the motto "Know Thyself." They believed that this understanding was necessary for a happy life. We think it is still good advice. Understanding ourselves is the key to understanding other people. Understanding ourselves as sexual human beings involves thinking about some of the values and attitudes about sex. Perhaps we have been taking these attitudes for granted all our lives. Understanding ourselves also helps us understand what attitudes and values we are passing on to our children.

Children learn language and behavior by day-to-day contact with parents. They learn attitudes and feelings about sex and sexuality the same way. The feelings that we have are affected by what we learned from our own parents. These feelings are passed from generation to generation. Of course, there are outside influences that color the values that children adopt. Some of these are relatives, teachers, and peers. Radio, TV, magazines, and newspapers also play an important part in forming values.

Sometimes we adopt the values of our parents or society without determining what we really feel and think about them.

ACTIVITY 3

IMPORTANT WORDS

Complete the bingo game in leaflet 7.

Directions: Place an "x" on the words that the definitions define. See if you can "Bingo." I will read the definitions and the words with you. After I finish that, you may wish to work in groups.

_ The unborn child after the third month of conception

_ The mature male reproductive cell capable of fertilizing the female egg

_ The mature female reproductive cell capable of being fertilized

_ Containing unborn young within the body

_ Refers to the act of putting the penis in the vagina

_ A male sex organ outside the body

_ A canal in the female that leads from the uterus to the outside of the body

[✓ vagina]	[✓ sperm]	fallopian tubes	[✓ pregnant]
ovary	[✓ penis]	womb	sexuality
[✓ sexual intercourse]	uterus	[✓ fetus]	umbilical cord
chromosome	labor	sex	[✓ ovum]

Definitions of the rest of the words are on the last page of the lesson.

We are going to be using words that may make some people uncomfortable. It is important to your child that you learn to think of the words that have to do with sexual development as usual terms. This room is safe. You can feel free to laugh at your own discomfort while using these words. Everybody is at least a little embarrassed using these words about sex at first.

ACTIVITY 4

MORE WORDS

(Note: If you are working with a group that does not read or write well, list the words given below one at a time on chalkboard or newsprint. Discuss as a group.)

Eight words or phrases dealing with sexuality are listed in the leaflet. Differences of opinion may occur about these words. Not only do parents and children disagree about some of them, but also some members of our society will disagree. Write down your reactions when you hear each of the words or phrases in Leaflet 7. Tell where these reactions came from.

	REACTIONS	WHY DID YOU REACT IN THESE WAYS?
Sexual intercourse		
Sex education in the school		
Nudity in the home		
Abortion		
Premarital sex		
Contraception		
Homosexuality		
Masturbation		

(Discuss terms one at a time.)

Values are learned from what a person experiences. This learning starts in the family in those very first years. It continues through the teen years. In the family you can provide the opportunity for your children to question, discuss, or think through your values. By encouraging this to happen, you have a greater chance for "your values" to become "their values."

For a belief or an idea to become a value:

- it must be chosen freely,
- chosen from alternatives after thinking about it,
- and then acted upon or defended publicly.

DISCUSSING VALUES IS IMPORTANT

When you allow yourself to be more open about sex and sexuality, you become a positive role model for your child. You help him develop a "sense of power." You give him an opportunity to connect to you. You help him develop an unusual advantage, being one of the few who can talk to his parents about sex and sexuality. Remember, these characteristics help develop high self-esteem.

Letting your child know your values is important. You may believe that it is wrong to bring an unwanted child into the world. You may believe that no one has a right to take sexual advantage of another. Tell your child. As a parent you have a right to express those opinions. Even if you live the values you teach, your child may think about and possibly try other values before he decides what his own values will be. Be patient. Keep listening to and talking with your child. Most children grow up to be like their parents.

Think about your own thoughts and feelings about sexuality. Decide which values you want to pass on to your children. Write them in Leaflet 7.

ACTIVITY 5

VALUES TO PASS ON TO YOUR CHILD

Write down some of the values about sexuality you want to pass on to your children in the leaflet on the space provided. Select a partner to discuss these with.

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN DEVELOP HEALTHY ATTITUDES

People have to receive love before they can give love. When an infant's needs are met with warmth and tenderness, she gets her first experience in love. Feeding, bathing, rocking, and cuddling an infant with love make the difference between whether or not she likes physical contact. As children move into middle childhood, they still need healthy touches and hugs. They also need to grow up knowing that affection can be expressed by emotional intimacy as well as by sexual intimacy. Children who have not experienced warmth and love are likely to be afraid of getting close to others emotionally. These are often the children who confuse physical closeness with emotional closeness. That attitude, unfortunately, is often responsible for early sexual intercourse. Often adolescents are only looking for love and acceptance. They have not learned there are other ways of showing affection. Many teens who have sexual intercourse with several different people are simply searching for love and approval.

We can see that attitudes about sexuality really do begin to form when a child is born. Children notice the relationship between their parents and form their own ideas about what a marriage is all about. As they grow, they begin to see differences in relationships. They are aware of the respect or lack of respect people have for each other. What they see strongly affects the way they feel about themselves as sexual beings. It also affects the way the child relates to other people.

SEX ROLES

It is very important that a child be comfortable with his or her sex. When a child senses that a parent wishes he were a girl, or she were a boy, the child begins to doubt his or her importance. He is not free to develop on his own if he feels he is not accepted for himself. It is extremely important that a child be valued just because he exists.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU TELL YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX?

Children who can talk about sexuality with their parents do not have sexual activity as early as children who cannot. This does not mean that a parent should feel she must give all the facts to a seven-year-old. Tell your children just a little more than what you think they will understand. Most children ask questions about what they are seeing and hearing in their world. These questions are good lead-ins to giving information about bodies, relationships, feelings, sexual intercourse, and infectious diseases.

There are certain things you would tell a twelve-year-old that you would not tell a seven-year-old. Every child in your family is at a different interest level. Boys and girls at the same age are not the same emotionally, physically, or socially. You, as a parent, know your children better than anyone else.

The Dormant Age, five to nine years, is a joyful happy period of life. Questions that might be asked during this period include:

"Why do fish lay eggs?"
"Where do puppies grow before they're born?"
"Why does my teenage sister (or you and daddy) lock your bedroom door?"
"Why am I a boy (girl)?"

Have your children asked you similar questions? What have they asked you? *(Invite discussion here.)*

If your child has not asked why Aunt Susie was fat before Cousin Joe was born and how he got out of her "tummy" by this time, you need to bring up the subject. Television and relatives are good springboards to conversation. Also use books that you read, either together or separately, and discuss. A suggested list is at the end of the leaflet.

The Awakened Age, ten to twelve years, is the time in children's lives when they become aware of themselves and others. Children at this age have a heightened curiosity about their bodies. They wonder about physical changes that are occurring within them. Common questions include:

"How does a baby breathe in a mother's stomach?"
"How can I get rid of pimples?"
"Does a woman have to get married to have babies?"

Answers should be given with absolute, direct honesty. The more complete and honest you are, the more respect and love you will get in return. Children will come closer to following your guidelines of morality. It is easier to be open and honest about difficult topics when you have been this way with everything.

SEX EDUCATION AWAY FROM HOME

Your child will get some sex education other than what you give her. The education children receive from friends, television, and movies may not be accurate. If you have created a comfortable climate at home, your child will discuss what she learns from other sources. Then you can correct what she has learned elsewhere. Public schools and churches offer sex education classes that usually have accurate information. These classes can broaden the knowledge you have given your child.

ACTIVITY 6

HOMEWORK

Practice being open and honest with your child this week. Be prepared to share the results of one experience you shared with your child while you were open and honest.

OTHER DEFINITIONS

Fallopian tubes - a pair of tubes through which the egg travels from the ovary to the uterus.

Womb - the place in the body where the unborn child grows. A Biblical term.

Uterus - Same as womb.

Chromosome - A small rod-shaped body found in the nucleus of all body cells that contains the genes or heredity factors.

Labor - the work of giving birth.

Sex - Male or female

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned that sexuality should be discussed in the family as matter of factly as everything else. If parents act uncomfortable with the subject, the children may not ask questions.

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be about different lifestyles and the problems and satisfactions unique to each.

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SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Ages Five-Six

Did the Sun Shine Before You Were Born? Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press

Where Did I Come From? Peter Mayle. Lyle Stuart Enterprises

A Better Safe Than Sorry Book. Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press

Wonderful Story of How You Were Born. Sidnoie Gruenberg

Ages Seven-Ten

Girls Are Girls and Boys Are Boys, So What's The Difference? Sol and Judith Gordon. Ed U Press

What's Happening to Me? Peter Mayle.

Ages Eleven-Twelve

The *Wonderful Story of How Babies Are Born.* S. M. Gruenberg

Period. Joann Gardner-Loulan, Bonnie Lopez, Marcia Quackenbush, Bolcano Press

Lynda Madras' Growing Up Guide For Girls. Lynda Madras, Newmarket Press

What's Happening To My Body, A Growing Up Guide For Mothers And Daughters. Lynda Madras, Newmarket Press

Growing And Changing, A Handbook For Preteens. Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman, MD. The Putman Publishing Group

Check your local library for these or other books. Remember to request inter- library loan if you do not find the one you want. Local book stores will often order specific book titles at your request.

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LIFESTYLES: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

LESSON 8 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will:

- recognize the different types of lifestyles,
- list advantages and disadvantages of each lifestyle,
- understand the effects lifestyles have on parenting skills, and
- provide directions for children who must be at home alone.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 8 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils
Chalkboard
Chalk

ACTIVITY 1

HOMEWORK

Choose a partner and explain how and when you were open and honest with your child this week. *(Allow a few minutes for discussion. Ask several parents to share with the group.)*

ACTIVITY 2

SHARING TIME

Pair off in groups of threes and share your lifestyle with each other. Is your family a single parent, couple, grandparents, or foster care family? Discuss how you make parenting decisions. Discuss problems, advantages, and disadvantages of your method of parenting. Would anyone like to share with the large group? *(Allow discussion time.)*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

When you think of a family, what comes to mind?
A mother, a father with kids all around.
You think of a home that's happy and warm
In a house that will keep the kids safe from harm.

But wait, there are others that we cannot see,
In some of the families, kids aren't at Mom's knee.
Mom is out working to help pay the bills.
She works her eight hours, then helps cure their ills.

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Some of these kids in the afternoon come
To a house that is empty, no one is at home.
These latch-key children must grow up fast.
They can't be as free as the kids in the past.

In some other families, big differences flower.
These are the children marked "his," "hers," and "ours."
There're two sets of kids from a previous spouse,
Then some of their own to fill up the house.

In some of the families, there is but one -
That single parent to finish the job just begun.
This could be by death or divorce from a spouse
Or an unwed mother alone in the house.

Perhaps there is one, not thought of too much,
Who gave up his kids in divorce action or such.
He visits his kids when the law says he can,
But can he be there when his son needs a man?

So you see many facets of family life.
It could be a husband, three kids and a wife.
It could be one parent or a mix from above
But whatever the family, there must be love.

Gloria Quick
Marlboro County

If family members think they have a family, they have one. On the other hand, if they think they have a "broken home," they probably do have one. When children believe that they have an intact home where they belong and are wanted, they feel safe. They generally believe the home is intact because the parent or parents believe so. A sense of their parents' commitment to the parental role is clear.

With the many types of family units in today's society, we must realize the advantages and disadvantages of each. This lesson is designed to help you look at the different lifestyles and their effects on parenting. It will also give you ideas for your child who may have to be at home alone. We will read the first section on different lifestyles in Leaflet 8 together. As we read, please underline the advantages of each lifestyle.

DIFFERENT LIFESTYLES

Nuclear Family - In this type of family, the couple forms the first unit. It has the longest history and most power. When children arrive, the couple becomes part of a parental unit.

The couple learns to parent together. Gradually they learn each other's values and ideas about child-rearing. Through compromise, negotiation, and sometimes dividing responsibility and control, they can find ways of handling differences.

In most nuclear families, the parents are the primary decision makers. Children become involved as parents teach them responsible behavior.

Single-Parent Family - This type of family can be the result of: divorce, desertion, separation, death, serious illness, single parent adoption, unwed parenthood, employment, or other family crisis that requires the prolonged absence of one parent.

The average time between divorce and remarriage is three years. This allows time for the parent and child to become closer. After death or divorce, a family has to re-group. Sometimes it has lost a member who had considerable responsibility and control. The missing parent's share of duties must still be completed. Income may be lowered; living space may change. Discipline, maintaining the household, and caring for each other take a new approach. Parent and child may become more dependent on each other. The family may share more, both emotionally and recreationally, than before the change. Children who lose a parent through death or divorce often learn to handle grief earlier than other children.

Each situation is different, but all single-parent families have some experiences in common. In all one-parent families, adults and children must exert extra effort to:

- accept family status,
- strengthen parent-child relationships, and
- learn management skills.

When a single parent family is the result of a divorce, the adult who does not keep the children usually continues to interact with the family in some ways. Couples divorce each other, but not their children. Even as the relationship ends, the parental unit does not. Usually over a period of one to five years, former spouses become more distant and less bound together. This is, of course, the opposite of what occurs in marriage. Because of this distancing, the couple becomes more separate in their division of parenting. They no longer care for the children within the same home or at the same time.

Cooperation is needed to ensure that each of the couple will have the freedom to parent and otherwise live in his or her own style. Parents communicate about their children - but usually do not share as many feelings and anecdotes about them. Special events such as holidays, birthdays, or weddings are often celebrated separately.

Shared values and beliefs are important. They help build a sense of trust in each other as parents. However, mutual beliefs and values are frequently not shared by divorced parents. Couples must find a way of dealing with each other's parenting style.

If the adult without the children has enough money to participate in hobbies or activities, that parent may enjoy freedom from the children. He may parent only on weekends, for example, and have the rest of the evenings free.

Blended Families - The traditional step-family is formed when a divorced or widowed parent with children marries a person with or without children. One of every eight children under age eighteen in the United States is living in a blended or step-family.

Living in a blended family is different from and more complicated than living in a nuclear family. Blended families must function in a different manner for many reasons.

Blended families are similar to each other and different from nuclear families in some ways that are listed below.

1. Blended families have more than two parents and many other relationships.
2. Parent-child relationships and those among children may be stronger and longer than the bond of the new blended family.
3. Family problems are more often related to the present.
4. Children are more likely to live in two households.
5. More family members have different life histories.
6. There is less protection against sexual taboos.
7. Blended family members initially mourn their losses.
8. Blended family members sometimes are burdened with guilt feelings.
9. There is an unrealistic expectation of instant love among family members.

10. Children and adults have divided loyalties for each other.
11. Role assumptions and name assignments are not clear.
12. There is less legal security in the blended family.

In general, blended families function much like other families.

ACTIVITY 3

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Each family unit has advantages and disadvantages. Some are listed. Can you think of others? Write your answers in the blanks in Leaflet 8.

	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Nuclear Family	Joint decisions Powerful unit ____________________ ____________________	Have to negotiate ____________________ ____________________ ____________________
Single Parent	Makes own decisions Independent ____________________ ____________________	Income may be lowered More responsibilities ____________________ ____________________
Adult Without the Children	Freedom to parent in own style Free time from children ____________________ ____________________	Lack of memory building No chance to see daily growth in children ____________________ ____________________
Blended Family	More than two parents ____________________ ____________________ ____________________	Often suffer guilt feelings Children sometimes live in two households ____________________

HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH FAMILY CHANGES

A parent is not the only person feeling lonely and deserted after a spouse's death, a divorce, or desertion. In fact, a child needs the parent now more than at any other time in his life. He has lost a parent. He has concerns and fears. He needs to know that the parent is aware of him and his concerns.

At times it is not easy to be honest with children—but honesty is the best policy. A parent need not go into the details. Truth is sometimes hard to cover up. Whatever the situation about the absent parent, children must have the truth without prejudice or hypocrisy. However, a wise parent will be careful. He will remember that criticism will not help. The child needs all the security he can get. Criticizing the absent parent will only make life more complicated.

Truth with simplicity will help the child put things together more accurately in his own mind.

If the child shows a need for the missing parent figure, enlist the aid of others. Children can be provided with a substitute mother or father. Friends, agencies, and individuals are ready to respond and give time as substitute parents for children in need.

Here are some suggestions to help children successfully handle difficult incidents:

Sometimes a teacher or leader will insist that the child make gifts or invitations for both parents. If this happens to your child, mail one to the absent parent or give it to a grandparent or another adult who is special to the child. Talk with the leader/teacher privately about being more sensitive to family differences in the classroom or group.

Warn children to expect sympathy or embarrassment from others and help them be prepared to respond in a sincere, simple, and positive way.

Teach your child to say matter of factly "My parents are divorced," or "My father died," or "My mom and I are my family."

Be prepared for the loneliness that may accompany birthdays, holidays, and vacations. Make plans to do something that eases that loneliness.

Try to keep some stability in traditions, friends, and surroundings to strengthen your family life. Create new traditions and find new ways to celebrate the uniqueness of your family.

When there is a function for dads and kids only or for moms and kids only, find a friend or relative willing to play the role of the absent parent.

Make it clear that yours is not a "broken" home. It works quite well and does not need "fixing" - all families need support and understanding.

ACTIVITY 4

WAYS TO CELEBRATE

Go to the library and look for books on celebration around the world. Talk with other families about how they celebrate. Make a list of ways your family can celebrate in Leaflet 8.

ACTIVITY 5

STRENGTHS OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Sound parent-child relationships have several areas of strength. See Leaflet 8. What are your family's strengths? Check the ones that apply. Circle the qualities you want to develop in your family.

Family Spirit
_____leadership
_____learning
_____love
_____loyalty

Responsibilities
_____clearly defined
_____evenly shared
_____willingly accepted
_____

Communication
_____laugh together
_____listen as much as talk
_____communicate enough
_____avoid distractions or interruptions

Disagreement
_____identify the problem
_____attack the issue not each other
_____stick to the point
_____do efficiently
_____implement solutions

HELPING THE CHILD WHO HAS TO BE HOME ALONE

Increasing numbers of working and single parents mean many children spend several hours a day at home without adult supervision. Some parents chose this arrangement because they feel the child is old enough to stay alone. Others may have no alternative.

While children can learn responsibility, resourcefulness, and independence at an early age, they may often feel afraid. Parents must prepare their child to stay at home without fear or danger.

Studies show that children who go home rather than "hang out" after school are less likely to get into trouble. They spend their time doing homework, watching television, or taking care of younger brother or sister. Children who "hang out" are more susceptible to peer pressure and getting into trouble than unsupervised children who go home alone or to a friend's home.

If you and your child feel comfortable with and there are no alternatives to her spending time alone at home, consider the following suggestions:

1. Make your home as burglar proof as possible. Put bolts on all house windows. Install lighting around the exterior of the home. Place a system of timers in the house programmed to turn on lights at variable periods.

2. Tell your child not to go into the house after school if the door is ajar, a window broken, or anything else looks unusual. Give instructions to go to a neighbor's house or a store to call and wait for you. Emphasize that the house should not be entered until an adult arrives.

3. Teach your child what to do in case of an emergency. Teach her how and when to call the police, fire department, and local ambulance service. Being prepared for emergencies helps to reduce your child's fears. Role playing may be a helpful activity to be sure that the child does know how to act.

4. Tell your child which of the adults living near your home can be turned to in time of need. If you are new to the neighborhood, canvass the area for responsible neighbors. Introduce your child to them. Make certain there is always someone available while you are away.

5. The telephone is important. Many parents ask that their children telephone as soon as they arrive home. It is a good idea for parents to telephone their children once or twice while the children are at home alone. If telephone calls are restricted at your place of work, arrange for calls to go to an appointed person in your neighborhood.

6. Plan activities that will keep your child occupied to help reduce fear of staying alone. Chores and projects are excellent ways to do this.

7. Provide a pet. Children especially like dogs and cats.

8. Prepare a safety kit. It should contain an identification card, a list of important telephone numbers, the correct change for several phone calls, and perhaps, enough money for bus or cab fare. One parent taped such a kit to the inside of her child's lunch bag. The kit was never used, but the child felt better just knowing it was there.

9. Sit down with your child and go over specific house rules. Discuss what you expect the child to do when a stranger comes to the door or when someone calls asking for her parents. Role playing is a good way to teach these skills.

10. Set up a routine with your child to help the child feel secure and able to be responsible. Decide on a time for play and a time for homework and/or household chores. Make sure the child has a checklist of chores that are supposed to be done.

11. Most children are hungry when they get home from school. Let your child know what and how much can be eaten. Leave a note or plan a specific snack place in the refrigerator. Set up a routine of eating a snack and cleaning dirty dishes.

12. Be punctual. Children seem to be able to cope fairly well until the time a parent is expected to arrive. Every minute after that can seem like an eternity. Tell your child exactly when you can be expected home and try to be there.

One final word. Be flexible and try new safety measures. Do not be afraid to change your child-care arrangements. Continuously check all aspects of the situation to be sure that your child is receiving the best possible care you can provide. You must feel that what your child is doing while you are not at home promotes her positive growth and development.

ACTIVITY 6

If your child is home alone sometimes, choose at least two changes to make her safer while you are away. Prepare to tell about these changes at the next meeting.

SUMMARY

We have discussed lifestyles in this lesson. Which new idea/s presented will you adopt?

WHAT NEXT?

The next lesson will be about help that is available for you as a parent. We will talk about ways to get help when you need it.

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SUPPORTS: SEEKING HELP

LESSON 9 IN A SERIES OF 9

OBJECTIVES

Parents will:

- remember that everyone has problems,
- review problem-solving techniques,
- realize that it is okay to ask for help with parenting concerns,
- know where to go for help with problems related to parenting, and
- understand the importance of extended families and networks of friends as supports.

MATERIALS

Leaflet 9 for each participant
Name tags
Pencils
Resource sheets
Displays of agency materials

ACTIVITY 1

SHARING TIME

Choose a person who has not been your partner before and share the results of the assignment from the last meeting. How did you make your home safer? *(Allow time for discussion between partners and call for general discussion.)*

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Through the years people have depended on each other in times of need. Even though Americans have prided themselves in being self-sufficient, families and friends have reached out to each other in hard times. Families meet crises more successfully and recover from them more quickly when relatives, friends, and neighbors are available to support them. When families and friends can go into each other's kitchens freely, stress is reduced. One study of young mothers (Colletta, 1981) found that those with high levels of support were more affectionate, closer, and more positive with their children. Those with low levels of support were more hostile, indifferent, and rejecting of their children. Other research shows that informal support systems just reduced the parental stress and did not really have an effect on parenting behaviors. Mothers who have a good opinion of their partners felt less depressed and less stressed about their parenting situation according to another study (Myers- Walls, 1983).

Today we have the advantages of modern living, new experiences, greater self-reliance, and more independence from spouses, in-laws, and curious neighbors. Do these advantages outweigh the loss of comfort and support from people who really care? In the place of close family and friends, agencies have become available to help those in need. The children in America are the future of our country. Do you as a parent have the right to ask agencies for help? *(Allow time for discussion.)*

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Let us read the United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child in Leaflet 9. *(Give a copy of the leaflet to each participant.)*

The United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child

The right to affection, love, and understanding.
The right to adequate nutrition and medical care.
The right to free education.
The right to full opportunity for play and recreation.
The right to a name and nationality.
The right to special care, if handicapped.
The right to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.
The right to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.
The right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.
The right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.

What do you think of these rights? *(Allow time for discussion.)*

If families and friends can not give children all of these, should government help? Why? *(Thank each person who responds, whether or not you agree with her opinion.)*

ACTIVITY 2

SOLVING PROBLEMS

In groups of three I would like you to make a list of problems parents like yourself might have. *(Divide into groups and assign each group one of these headings to discuss related problems: personal, social, financial, medical, legal, and educational. Allow time for this activity.)*

A method of solving problems is described in Leaflet 9. Let us look at it now. *(Read together "Solving Problems.")*

In the family situation, solving a problem must be approached in a calm, nonemotional, nonthreatening environment. Those involved in the problem need to have input and be respected for their contributions. Following these steps will lead to satisfactory solutions to problems.

1. Figure out just what the problem is. This means look for the problem, not the results of the problem.

2. Brainstorm ways that the problem might be solved. Encourage all family members to brainstorm possible solutions. Build on ideas of others. Brainstorming is a way to identify and list all the solutions you and your family can think of. Some ideas on your list may be "way out," but that is okay. At this point the idea is to see how many solutions can be generated. This step is not the place to judge the worth of any solution. That comes later.

3. Now, explore the solutions you have listed carefully. What resources are needed? What may happen if you choose this solution or that solution? Do you need to use parts of two ideas to get everyone's agreement?

4. Based on the judgement of those involved, choose a solution that all can support. Remember that no matter how carefully you list solutions and seek additional information about a problem, you will never know everything about the solutions. At

some point in time the family has to make the best decision based on what is known at that time. If you wait until you have all the facts, you will never get the problem solved.

ACTIVITY 3

BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

Please take one of the problems you listed and brainstorm ways to solve it. Write down 10 ways in the space provided. *(You may offer a small prize to the group who thinks of 10 solutions first.)* Now, please choose the one solution that would have the best chance of working. *(Ask someone from each group to share with the large group some of the things that happened in the small group.)*

The best thing to do with any problem is to go through the steps listed in "Solving Problems." One way to come up with many alternatives is to ask more people to help you think of solutions. I hope you will remember to use the process on your next problem. And, when you get that problem solved, you will have another one. Life is full of problems. What is the opposite of having problems? You are right. Death is the only way to be without problems, and most of us choose to keep the problems.

Some people and families start through the problem-solving process as soon as a problem occurs. Other individuals and families feel sorry for themselves and do not try to solve the problem. We do not know what makes the difference, but we do know that children learn attitudes about solving life's problems from their parents. Also, the family seems to be the only place a child can learn the problem-solving process we just covered.

Family meetings are good places to show your children how the process works. Even a five-year-old can begin to help with brainstorming. She may have some solutions that will not work, but her ideas may cause someone to think of a workable idea. One word of caution—do not laugh at anyone's suggestions. If you do, you may stop that person from making any more comments.

IDEAS

Raising children is a tough job. No one has to do it alone.

Asking for help is not a sign of failure. It is a sign of effective parenting.

SUPPORT IS THERE FOR THE TAKING. WHO IS ON YOUR LIST?

You may need to arrange a conference with your child's teacher or the guidance counselor if there is a school-related problem. If you need financial support, food, or housing, try area churches, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health, or the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. What are other sources of support?

(Give out resource sheets. Go over them and see if there are any questions.)

The Children and Adult Resource Express, CARE, is a database containing information to help families with children. Your county Extension agent can help you locate services and service providers. *(You may give a demonstration of CARE here.)*

ASSERTIVENESS

Today's society of institutions, bureaucracies, and authoritarian relationships may cause us to feel powerless and overwhelmed. The stress of the daily reminders of the impersonal nature of society—such as waiting in line only to be told you have to wait in another—can leave you feeling confused and frustrated. One way to respond to these demands is by verbal aggressiveness or attacking people. Another way is to react submissively— give up your own interests and allow other people to run over you without even a protest. The third way is to behave assertively—a way where you express and achieve your own wants and needs without violating the wants and needs of others.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AGGRESSIVE, SUBMISSIVE, OR ASSERTIVE?

People act aggressively when they:
- intentionally attack, take advantage of, humiliate, hurt, or put down other people.
- behave as if others are not as important as they are.

People act submissively when they:
- allow or encourage others to take advantage of them.
- act as if other people are always more important by putting themselves down.

People act assertively when they:
- express themselves openly and honestly to communicate their wants and feelings without putting others down or discounting the wants or feelings of others.
- behave as if they believe that all people, including themselves, are equally important.

Let's take a look at some examples of aggressive, submissive, and assertive behaviors. How would you want someone to respond to you?

1. A neighbor comes uninvited to your door and wants to have coffee and chat. You are going out later and have planned to help your child with his homework first.

(Aggressive) You scowl and say, "You've got to be kidding. Can't you see I have a million things to do?"

(Submissive) You are afraid to offend the neighbor, so you say, "Sure, come on in." You end up late for your other appointment and do not help your child.

(Assertive) You say, "Gee, I'd really like to visit with you, but I am busy right now. Can we plan a time to get together later?"

2. You find that your child's teacher has accused him of something unjustly.

(Aggressive) In front of others, loudly demand an explanation.

(Submissive) Worry, and do nothing.

(Assertive) Privately, quietly, and firmly, ask the teacher for an explanation.

ACTIVITY 4

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

By now probably you can think of times when you have acted aggressively, submissively, or assertively.

There may have been times when you:
- wanted to talk to your child's teacher about your child,
- wanted to get rid of a door-to-door salesperson,
- wanted to turn down someone's request to borrow something,

- wanted to ask someone for something,
- wanted to ask someone for a meeting or a date, or
- wanted to tell someone that their smoking or loud noise was disturbing you.

These are just a few examples. Think of some similar situations in which you have been. Decide whether your own behavior was aggressive, submissive, or assertive. Looking back, how could you have handled the situation more effectively? Write your responses in Leaflet 9.

SUMMARY

All parents probably need help at one time or another. Friends, families, agencies, religious institutions, and self-made support groups are available. Often you need to ask. Of course, we always want to try the help that is at the end of our arms first. Americans take pride in being self-sufficient. We can organize support groups and make friends before a crisis comes. One way to do this is by helping others when they are in need.

EVALUATION OF SERIES - HOW FAR HAVE I COME?

OTHER IDEAS FOR THIS LESSON

Invite agency people to discuss their services (optional).

Invite parents to come to Extension office for other programs and information.

ADDITIONAL HELPS AND RESOURCES

Christenbury, J. (1986). Decision-making for young families. *Alternatives.* Clemson: Cooperative Extension Service.

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Couchman, G. M. (1989). *Decision-making: it can work for you.* Clemson: Cooperative Extension Service.

Couchman, G. M. (1989). *Life plans: goals and priorities.* Clemson: Cooperative Extension Service.

Footsteps teacher manual, Part 1. (1979). Maryland: University Park Press.

Goth-Owens, J.C. (1981). *The stress connection.* Washington: National 4-H Council.

Myers-Walls, J. (1983). Parenthood: Stresses and coping strategies. In H. McCubbin & R. Figley (Eds.), *Stress and the family: Coping with normative transitions.* New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc.

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